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A.M. L.T.D.

9/16 to 7/17

I.Q. S. T.

From

Doris Elizabeth Enrich

women have a much better
time than men in this
world; there ~~is~~ are far more
things forbidden them.

POEMS OF SHELLEY

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AN ANTHOLOGY
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE
POET'S DEATH THE 8TH JULY

1822

RICHARD
COBDEN-SANDERSON
17 THAVIES INN

1922

PREFATORY NOTE

I

THIS ANTHOLOGY, in commemoration of the death of SHELLEY, is arranged in FIVE PARTS. In PART I (LOVE AND LIFE) are developed in rhythmic sequence the emotions of Dejection, Love, Longing, Despair, and Death. In PART II (ALAS-TOR), PART I is resumed in the life of a poet, a dream of youth, and is closed again in Death. In PART III (ADONAI), the Painted Veil, which men miscall Life, is lifted and everywhere Life is seen to be immortal. In PART IV (THE EVER-LASTING UNIVERSE) the Poet, 'holding an unremitting intercourse with the everlasting universe of things—now dark, now glittering, now reflecting gloom, now lending splendour—renders and receives fast influencings'; and at one time interprets Nature in terms of himself, his human mind, and at another himself in terms of Nature; and in all her music, 'from the moan of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird,' his voice is heard. In PART V (MAN EMANCIPATE) the Poet, insurgent, achieves for mankind the great vision, the Vision Sublime of MAN EMANCIPATE, in which

The Painted Veil, by those who were called Life,
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,
All men believed or hoped, is torn aside.
The loathsome mask has fallen, the MAN remains;
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but MAN;
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,

Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself, just, gentle, wise, but MAN.

PASSIONLESS ? no, yet free from guilt or pain
Which were, for his will made or suffered them ;
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

II

This Arrangement might suffice as an Anthology
of the essential Poems, 'folded in their own eternity';
but as the Editor would at the same time present a
self-drawn image of the Poet, insatiate and aspiring,
'insatiate till to love and live be one, one immortality,
one annihilation,' he has prefixed to the Poems, as
PROLOGUE, THE HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL
BEAUTY, and as EPILOGUE has built out beyond
them, as it were into the infinite, EPIPSYCHIDION,
in which 'the height of Love's rare Universe'
approached the Poet's imagination reels and the Poet
imagines himself to expire in an ecstasy of bliss.

L'Anima amante si slancia fuori del creato,
e si crea nel infinito un Mondo
tutto per essa.

III

The Poet was born at Field Place in Sussex on the 14th of August 1792 : and from Leghorn on the 8th of July 1822 'put out to sea.' Wrecked, the Poet's body was burnt, in the presence of Lord Byron, Trelawny, and Leigh Hunt, on the shore of the Mediterranean near to Via Reggio. Taken thence to Rome, in that 'high Capital of kingly Death' the ashes, the grey ashes of the Poet, lie buried.

But he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

T. J. COBDEN-SANDERSON

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PROEM

ON a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept ;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aërial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illumine
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be ;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality !

PROLOGUE

I

PRO-LOGUE THE awful shadow of some unseen Power
 Floats, though unseen, amongst us, visiting
 This various world with as inconstant wing
 As summer winds that creep from flower to flower ;
 Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain
 shower,
 It visits with inconstant glance
 Each human heart and countenance ;
 Like hues and harmonies of evening.
 Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
 Like memory of music fled,
 Like aught that for its grace may be
 Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

II

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate
 With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
 Of human thought or form, where art thou gone ?
 Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
 This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate ?
 Ask why the sunlight not for ever
 Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river :
 Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown ;
 Why fear and dream and death and birth
 Cast on the daylight of this earth
 Such gloom ; why man has such a scope
 For love and hate, despondency and hope.

III

PRO- LOGUE

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
To sage or poet these responses given :
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavour ;
Frail spells, whose uttered charm might not avail to
 sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
Thy light alone, like mists o'er mountains driven,
Or music by the night wind sent
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

IV

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds, depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
 Thou messenger of sympathies,
 That wax and wane in lover's eyes ;
Thou, that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame !
Depart not as thy shadow came :
Depart not—lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

V

PRO-LOGUE While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
 'Thro' many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
 Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
 I called on poisonous names with which our youth is
 fed ;
 I was not heard, I saw them not :
 When, musing deeply on the lot
 Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
 All vital things that wake to bring
 News of birds and blossoming,
 Sudden, thy shadow fell on me ;
 I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy !

VI

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
 To thee and thine : have I not kept the vow ?
 With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
 I call the phantoms of a thousand Hours
 Each from his voiceless grave : they have in visioned
 bowers
 Of studious zeal or love's delight
 Outwatched with me the envious night :
 They know that never joy illumed my brow
 Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
 This world from its dark slavery,
 That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,
 Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

VII

PRO- LOGUE

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past : there is a harmony
In Autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
Which through the Summer is not heard or seen,
As if it could not be, as if it had not been !
Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of Nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm, to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

POEMS

PART I. LOVE AND DEATH

I

FIRST our pleasures die—and then
Our hopes, and then our fears—and when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust—and we die too.

II

All things that we love and cherish,
Like ourselves must fade and perish,
Such is our rude mortal lot—
Love itself would, did they not.

It was a spring that never came;
But we are wise enough to know
The things we never have, remains;
It is the things we have that go.

PART I THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
i The waves are dancing fast and bright ;
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
 The purple noon's transparent might ;
 The breath of the moist earth is light,
Around its unexpanded buds ;
 Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself is soft, like Solitude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
 With green and purple seaweeds strown ;
I see the waves upon the shore,
 Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown :
 I sit upon the sands alone ;
The lightning of the noontide ocean
 Is flashing round me, and a tone
 Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet ! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas ! I have nor hope nor health,
 Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
 The sage in meditation found,
 And walked with inward glory crowned ;
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
 Others I see whom these surround ;
 Smiling they live, and call life pleasure ;
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild,

Even as the winds and waters are ;

I could lie down like a tired child,

And weep away the life of care

Which I have borne and yet must bear,

Till death like sleep might steal on me,

And I might feel in the warm air

My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea

Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

PART I

i

Some might lament that I were cold,

As I, when this sweet day is gone,

Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,

Insults with this untimely moan ;

They might lament—for I am one

Whom men love not,—and yet regret ;

Unlike this day, which, when the sun

Shall on its stainless glory set,

Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

PART I UNFATHOMABLE Sea, whose waves are years ;

ii Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
Are brackish with the salt of human tears !

Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow
Claspest the limits of mortality !

And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore ;
Treachorous in calm, and terrible in storm,
Who shall put forth on thee,
Unfathomable Sea ?

I

TELL me, thou star, whose wings of light
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
In what cavern of the night
Will thy pinions close now ?

PART I

iii

II

Tell me, moon, thou pale and gray
Pilgrim of Heaven's homeless way,
In what depth of night or day
Seekest thou repose now ?

III

Weary wind, who wanderest
Like the world's rejected guest,
Hast thou still some secret nest
On the tree or billow ?

PART I

iv

ART thou pale for weariness
Of climbing Heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy ?

ROUGH wind, that moanest loud

Grief too sad for song ;

Wild wind, when sullen cloud

Knells all the night long ;

Sad storm, whose tears are vain,

Bare woods, whose branches strain,

Deep caves and dreary main,

Wail, for the world's wrong !

PART I

v

PART I

vi

THE blasts of Autumn drive the wingèd seeds
Over the earth ; next come the snows, and rain,
And frosts, and storms, which dreary Winter leads
Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train ;
Behold ! Spring sweeps over the world again,
Shedding soft dews from her ethereal wings ;
Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain,
And music on the waves and woods she flings,
And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.

I

THE warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing, PART I
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying, vii

And the year

On the earth her deathbed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
Is lying ;

Come, Months, come away,

From November to May,

In your saddest array ;

Follow the bier

Of the dead cold Year,

And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

II

The chill rain is falling, the nipt worm is crawling,

The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling

For the Year ;

The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone

To his dwelling ;

Come, Months, come away ;

Put on white, black, and gray ;

Let your light sisters play :

Ye, follow the bier

Of the dead cold Year,

And make her grave green with tear on tear.

PART I

viii

I

ORPHAN Hours, the Year is dead :
Come and sigh, come and weep !
Merry Hours, smile instead,
For the Year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.

II

As an earthquake rocks a corse
In its coffin in the clay,
So white Winter, that rough nurse,
Rocks the death-cold Year to-day ;
Solemn Hours ! wail aloud
For your mother in her shroud.

III

As the wild air stirs and sways
The tree-swung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days
Rocks the Year : be calm and mild,
Trembling Hours, she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

IV

January gray is here,
Like a sexton by her grave ;
February bears the bier,
March with grief doth howl and rave,
And April weeps—but, O ye Hours,
Follow with May's fairest flowers.

'TWAS at the season when the Earth upsprings
From slumber ; as a spherèd angel's child,
Shadowing its eyes with green and golden wings,

PART I

ix

Stands up before its mother bright and mild,
Of whose soft voice the air expectant seems,
So stood before the Sun, which shone and smiled

To see it rise thus joyous from its dreams,
The fresh and radiant Earth. The hoary grove
Waxed green, and flowers burst forth like starry
beams ;

The grass in the warm sun did start and move,
And sea-buds burst beneath the waves serene :
How many a one, though none be near to love,

Loves then the shade of his own soul, half seen
In any mirror, or the Spring's young minions,
The wingèd leaves amid the copses green ;

How many a spirit then puts on the pinions
Of fancy, and outstrips the lagging blast,
And his own steps, and over wide dominions

Sweeps in his dream-drawn chariot, far and fast,
More fleet than storms—the wide world shrinks below,
When Winter and despondency are past.

PART I THOU art the wine whose drunkenness is all
x We can desire, O Love ! and happy souls,
Ere from thy vine the leaves of Autumn fall,

Catch thee, and feed from their o'er-flowing bowls
Thousands who thirst for thy ambrosial dew ;
Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls

Investeth it ; and when the heavens are blue
Thou fillest them ; and when the earth is fair
The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

Its deserts and its mountains, till they wear
Beauty like some bright robe : thou ever soarest
Among the towers of men, and as soft air

In Spring, which moves the unawakened forest,
Clothing with leaves its branches bare and bleak,
Thou floatest among men ; and aye implorest

That which from thee they should implore : the weak
Alone kneel to thee, offering up the hearts
The strong have broken : yet where shall any seek

A garment whom thou clothest not ?

I

THE fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of Heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion ;
Nothing in the world is single ;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle ;
Why not I with thine ?

PART I

xi

II

See the mountains kiss high Heaven,
And the waves clasp one another ;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother ;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea :
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me ?

I

PART I

xii

SWIFTLY walk over the western wave,
 Spirit of Night !
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,
 Swift be thy flight !

II

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
 Star-inwrought !
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day,
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long sought !

III

When I arose and saw the dawn,
 I sighed for thee ;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
 I sighed for thee.

IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Wouldst thou me ?

Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side ?
Wouldst thou me ?—And I replied,
No, not thee !

PART I
xii

V

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon :
Sleep will come when thou art fled :
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, belovèd Night,
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon !

I

PART I

xiii

THE golden gates of sleep unbar
Where Strength and Beauty, met together,
Kindle their image like a star
In a sea of glassy weather.
Night, with all thy stars look down,
Darkness, weep thy holiest dew,
Never smiled the inconstant moon
On a pair so true.
Let eyes not see their own delight ;
Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight
Oft renew.

II

Fairies, sprites, and angels keep her !
Holy stars, permit no wrong !
And return to wake the sleeper,
Dawn, ere it be long !
O joy ! O fear ! what will be done
In the absence of the sun !
Come along !

I

SWIFTER far than summer's flight,
Swifter far than youth's delight,
Swifter far than happy night,

Art thou come and gone :
As the wood when leaves are shed,
As the night when sleep is fled,
As the heart when joy is dead,
I am left lone, alone.

PART I

xiv

II

The swallow summer comes again,
The owlet night resumes her reign,
But the wild-swan youth is fain
To fly with thee, false as thou.
My heart each day desires the morrow,
Sleep itself is turned to sorrow,
Vainly would my winter borrow
Sunny leaves from any bough.

III

Lilies for a bridal bed,
Roses for a matron's head,
Violets for a maiden dead,
Pansies let my flowers be ;
On the living grave I bear
Scatter them without a tear :
Let no friend, however dear,
Waste one hope, one fear for me.

PART I

xv

I

I ARISE from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright :
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how ?
To thy chamber window, sweet !

II

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream ;
And the Champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream ;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,
As I must on thine,
Oh belovèd as thou art !

III

Oh lift me from the grass !
I die ! I faint ! I fail !
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas !
My heart beats loud and fast,
Oh press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last.

I

PART I

xvi

MY faint spirit was sitting in the light
 Of thy looks, my love ;
 It panted for thee like the hind at noon
 For the brooks, my love.
 Thy barb whose hoofs outspeed the tempest's flight
 Bore thee far from me ;
 My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon,
 Did companion thee.

II

Ah ! fleeter far than fleetest storm or steed,
 Or the death they bear,
 The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove
 With the wings of care ;
 In the battle, in the darkness, in the need,
 Shall mine cling to thee,
 Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,
 It may bring to thee.

PART I
xvii

I

ONE word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it.
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

II

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not ;
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow ?

I

WHEN passion's trance is overpast,
If tenderness and truth could last
Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep
Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,
I should not weep, I should not weep !

PART I

xviii

II

It were enough to feel, to see,
Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,
And dream the rest—and burn and be
The secret food of fires unseen,
Couldst thou but be as thou hast been.

III

After the slumber of the year
The woodland violets reappear,
All things revive in field or grove,
And sky and sea, but two, which move,
And form all others, life and love.

PART I

xix

ARIEL to Miranda.—Take
This slave of Music, for the sake
Of him who is the slave of thee,
And teach it all the harmony
In which thou canst, and only thou,
Make the delighted spirit glow,
Till joy denies itself again,
And, too intense, is turned to pain ;
For by permission and command
Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,
Poor Ariel sends this silent token
Of love that never can be spoken ;
Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,
From life to life, must still pursue
Your happiness ; for thus alone
Can Ariel ever find his own.
From Prospero's enchanted cell,
As the mighty verses tell,
To the throne of Naples, he
Lit you o'er the trackless sea,
Flitting on, your prow before,
Like a living meteor.
When you die, the silent Moon,
In her interlunar swoon,
Is not sadder in her cell
Than deserted Ariel.
When you live again on earth,
Like an unseen star of birth
Ariel guides you o'er the sea

Of life from your nativity.

PART I

Many changes have been run,
Since Ferdinand and you begun
Your course of love, and Ariel still
Has tracked your steps and served your
will ;

xix

Now, in humbler, happier lot,
This is all remembered not ;
And now, alas ! the poor sprite is
Imprisoned for some fault of his,
In a body like a grave ;
From you he only dares to crave,
For his service and his sorrow,
A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.
¶ The artist who this idol wrought,
To echo all harmonious thought,
Felled a tree, while on the steep
The woods were in their winter sleep,
Rocked in that repose divine
On the wind-swept Apennine ;
And dreaming, some of Autumn past,
And some of Spring approaching fast,
And some of April buds and showers,
And some of songs in July bowers,
And all of love ; and so this tree,
Oh that such our death may be !
Died in sleep, and felt no pain,
To live in happier form again :
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,

PART I

xix

The artist wrought this loved Guitar,
And taught it justly to reply,
To all who question skilfully,
In language gentle as thine own ;
Whispering in enamoured tone
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
And summer winds in sylvan cells ;
For it had learnt all harmonies
Of the plains and of the skies,
Of the forests and the mountains,
And the many-voicèd fountains ;
The clearest echoes of the hills,
The softest notes of falling rills,
The melodies of birds and bees,
The murmuring of summer seas,
And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
And airs of evening ; and it knew
That seldom-heard mysterious sound,
Which, driven on its diurnal round,
As it floats through boundless day,
Our world enkindles on its way—
All this it knows, but will not tell
To those who cannot question well
The spirit that inhabits it ;
It talks according to the wit
Of its companions ; and no more
Is heard than has been felt before,
By those who tempt it to betray
These secrets of an elder day :

But sweetly as its answers will
Flatter hands of perfect skill,
It keeps its highest, holiest tone
For our belovèd Jane alone.

PART I
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PART I

xx

BEST and brightest, come away !
Fairer far than this fair Day,
Which, like thee to those in sorrow,
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough year just awake
In its cradle on the brake.
The brightest Hour of unborn Spring,
Through the winter wandering,
Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn
To hoar February born ;
Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
It kissed the forehead of the Earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free,
And waked to music all their fountains,
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
And like a prophetess of May
Strewed flowers upon the barren way,
Making the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.
¶ Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs—
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonises heart to heart.
¶ Radiant Sister of the Day,

Awake ! arise ! and come away !
To the wild woods and the plains,
And the pools where winter rains
Image all their roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green and ivy dun
Round stems that never kiss the sun ;
Where the lawns and pastures be,
And the sandhills of the sea ;
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers and violets
Which yet join not scent to hue,
Crown the pale Year weak and new ;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dun and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one
In the universal sun.

PART I

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PART I

xxi

I

NOW the last day of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead,
Rise, Memory, and write its praise !
Up to thy wonted work ! come, trace
The epitaph of glory fled :
For now the earth has changed its face,
A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

II

We wandered to the Pine Forest
That skirts the Ocean's foam ;
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.
The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the bosom of the deep
The smile of Heaven lay.
It seemed as if the hour were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which scattered from above the sun
A light of Paradise.

III

We paused amid the Pines that stood
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
As serpents interlaced,
And soothed by every azure breath,

That under Heaven is blown,
To harmonies and hues beneath,
As tender as its own ;
Now all the tree-tops lay asleep,
Like green waves on the sea,
As still as in the silent deep
The ocean woods may be.

PART I
xxi

IV

How calm it was !—the silence there
By such a chain was bound
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound
The inviolable quietness ;
The breath of peace we drew
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.
There seemed from the remotest seat
Of the white mountain waste,
To the soft flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced,—
A spirit interfused around,
A thrilling silent life,
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal nature's strife ;—
And still I felt the centre of
The magic circle there,
Was one fair form that filled with love
The lifeless atmosphere.

PART I

xxi

We paused beside the pools that lie
 Under the forest bough,
 Each seemed as 'twere a little sky
 Gulphed in a world below ;
 A firmament of purple light,
 Which in the dark earth lay,
 More boundless than the depth of night,
 And purer than the day :
 In which the lovely forests grew
 As in the upper air,
 More perfect both in shape and hue
 Than any spreading there.
 There lay the glade and neighbouring lawn,
 And through the dark green wood
 The white sun twinkling like the dawn
 Out of a speckled cloud.
 Sweet views, which in our world above
 Can never well be seen,
 Were imaged by the water's love
 Of that fair forest green.
 And all was interfused beneath
 With an elysian glow,
 An atmosphere without a breath,
 A softer day below.
 Like one beloved, the scene had lent
 To the dark water's breast
 Its every leaf and lineament
 With more than truth exprest ;
 Until an envious wind crept by,

Like an unwelcome thought,
Which from the mind's too faithful eye
Blots one dear image out.
Though thou art ever fair and kind,
The forests ever green,
Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,
Than calm in waters seen.

PART I

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PART I

xxii

SHE left me at the silent time
When the moon had ceased to climb
The azure path of Heaven's steep,
And, like an albatross asleep,
Balanced on her wings of light,
Hovered in the purple night,
Ere she sought her ocean nest
In the chambers of the West.
She left me, and I stayed alone
Thinking over every tone
Which, though silent to the ear,
The enchanted heart could hear,
Like notes which die when born, but still
Haunt the echoes of the hill ;
And feeling ever—oh, too much !
The soft vibration of her touch,
As if her gentle hand, even now,
Lightly trembled on my brow ;
And thus, although she absent were,
Memory gave me all of her
That even Fancy dares to claim :
Her presence had made weak and tame
All passions, and I lived alone
In the time which is our own ;
The past and future were forgot,
As they had been, and would be, not.
But soon, the guardian angel gone,
The dæmon reassumed his throne
In my faint heart. I dare not speak

My thoughts ; but thus disturbed and weak
I sat and saw the vessels glide
Over the ocean bright and wide,
Like spirit-wingèd chariots sent
O'er some serenest element
For ministrations strange and far ;
As if to some Elysian star
They sailed for drink to medicine
Such sweet and bitter pain as mine.
And the wind that winged their flight
From the land came fresh and light,
And the scent of wingèd flowers,
And the coolness of the hours
Of dew, and sweet warmth left by day,
Were scattered o'er the twinkling bay.
And the fisher with his lamp
And spear about the low rocks damp
Crept, and struck the fish which came
To worship the delusive flame.
Too happy they, whose pleasure sought
Extinguishes all sense and thought
Of the regret that pleasure leaves,
Destroying life alone, not peace !

PART I

xxii

PART I
xxiii

I

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight !
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night ?
Many a weary night and day
'Tis since thou art fled away.

II

How shall ever one like me
Win thee back again ?
With the joyous and the free
Thou wilt scoff at pain.
Spirit false ! thou hast forgot
All but those who need thee not.

III

As a lizard with the shade
Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismayed ;
Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

IV

Let me set my mournful ditty
To a merry measure,
Thou wilt never come for pity,
Thou wilt come for pleasure ;
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

V

I love all that thou lovest,
 Spirit of Delight !
 The fresh Earth in new leaves drest,
 And the starry night ;
 Autumn evening, and the morn
 When the golden mists are born.

PART I

xxiii

VI

I love snow, and all the forms
 Of the radiant frost ;
 I love waves, and winds, and storms,
 Every thing almost
 Which is Nature's and may be
 Untainted by man's misery.

VII

I love tranquil solitude,
 And such society
 As is quiet, wise, and good ;
 Between thee and me
 What difference ? but thou dost possess
 The things I seek, not love them less.

VIII

I love Love—though he has wings,
 And like light can flee ;
 But above all other things,
 Spirit, I love thee—
 Thou art love and life ! Oh come,
 Make once more my heart thy home.

I

PART I

xxiv

O WORLD ! O life ! O time !

On whose last steps I climb

Trembling at that where I had stood before ;

When will return the glory of your prime ?

No more—Oh never more !

II

Out of the day and night

A joy has taken flight ;

Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,

Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight

No more—Oh never more !

I

WHEN the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead ;
When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet notes are remembered not ;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

PART I

xxv

II

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute :
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind in a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest ;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possest.
O Love ! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier ?

IV

PART I

xxv

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high :
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

I

THE flower that smiles to-day
 To-morrow dies ;
 All that we wish to stay
 Tempts and then flies ;
 What is this world's delight ?
 Lightning that mocks the night,
 Brief even as bright.

PART I

xxvi

II

Virtue, how frail it is !
 Friendship how rare !
 Love, how it sells poor bliss
 For proud despair !
 But we, though soon they fall,
 Survive their joy and all
 Which ours we call.

III

Whilst skies are blue and bright,
 Whilst flowers are gay,
 Whilst eyes that change ere night
 Make glad the day ;
 Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
 Dream thou—and from thy sleep
 Then wake to weep.

To-morrow may end all

I

PART I I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,
xxvii Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring,
And gentle odours led my steps astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

II

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets ;
Daisies, those pearled Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets ;
Faint oxlips ; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved ; and that tall flower that wets—
Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth—
Its mother's face with Heaven's collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

III

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cowbind and the moonlight-coloured May,
And cherry blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drained not by the day ;
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray ;
And flowers azure, black and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

IV

PART I

xxvii

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked with
white,
And starry river-buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light ;
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

V

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
Within my hand ; and then, elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it — Oh ! to whom ?

I

PART I

xxviii

WILT thou forget the happy hours
Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,
Heaping over their corpses cold
Blossoms and leaves instead of mould ?
 Blossoms which were the joys that fell,
 And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

II

Forget the dead, the past ? Oh yet
There are ghosts that may take revenge for it,
Memories that make the heart a tomb,
Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
 And with ghastly whispers tell
 That joy, once lost, is pain.

I

LIKE the ghost of a dear friend dead

Is Time long past.

A tone which is now forever fled,

A hope which is now forever past,

A love so sweet it could not last,

Was Time long past.

PART I

xxix

II

There were sweet dreams in the night

Of Time long past :

And, was it sadness or delight,

Each day a shadow onward cast

Which made us wish it yet might last,

That Time long past.

III

There is regret, almost remorse,

For Time long past.

'Tis like a child's beloved corse

A father watches, till at last

Beauty is like remembrance, cast

From Time long past.

PART I

xxx

I

THAT time is dead for ever, child,
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever !

We look on the past
And stare aghast
At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast,
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled
To death on life's dark river.

II

The stream we gazed on then, rolled by ;
Its waves are unreturning ;
But we yet stand
In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

I

THEY die—the dead return not. Misery
Sits near an open grave and calls them over,
A Youth with hoary hair and haggard eye.

PART I

xxxi

They are the names of kindred, friend, and lover,
Which he so feebly calls : they all are gone !
Fond wretch, all dead ! Those vacant names alone,
This most familiar scene, my pain,
These tombs, alone remain.

II

Misery, my sweetest friend—oh, weep no more !
Thou wilt not be consoled : I wonder not !
For I have seen thee from thy dwelling's door
Watch the calm sunset with them, and this spot
Was even as bright and calm, but transitory ;
And now thy hopes are gone, thy hair is hoary ;
This most familiar scene, my pain,
These tombs, alone remain.

PART I THE wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
xxxii Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray ;
And pallid Evening twines its beaming hair
In duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day :
Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men,
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,
Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea ;
Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,
Responding to the charm with its own mystery.
The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass
Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, ærial Pile ! whose pinnacles
Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells,
Clothing in hues of Heaven thy dim and distant spire,
Around whose lessening and invisible height
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres :
And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound,
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,
Breathed from their wormy beds all living things
around,
And mingling with the still night and mute sky
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnised and softened, death is mild
And terrorless as this serenest night :
Here could I hope, like some inquiring child
Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human
 sight
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.

PART I

xxxii

PART II. ALASTOR : OR THE SPIRIT
OF SOLITUDE

Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quaerebam
quid amarem, amans
amare.

PART II EARTH, Ocean, Air, belovèd brotherhood !

Alastor If our great Mother has imbued my soul
 With aught of natural piety to feel
 Your love, and recompense the boon with mine ;
 If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,
 With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
 And solemn midnight's tingling silentness ;
 If Autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
 And Winter robing with pure snow and crowns
 Of starry ice the grey grass and bare boughs ;
 If Spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes
 Her first sweet kisses have been dear to me ;
 If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast
 I consciously have injured, but still loved
 And cherished these my kindred : then forgive
 This boast, belovèd brethren, and withdraw
 No portion of your wonted favour now !
 ¶ Mother of this unfathomable world !
 Favour my solemn song, for I have loved
 Thee ever, and thee only ; I have watched
 Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,
 And my heart ever gazes on the depth
 Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed
 In charnels and on coffins, where black death
 Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,
 Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
 Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost,
 Thy messenger, to render up the tale
 Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,
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When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness, PART II
Like an inspired and desperate alchemist Alastor

Staking his very life on some dark hope,
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
With my most innocent love, until strange tears,
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made
Such magic as compels the charmed night
To render up thy charge : and, though ne'er yet
Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,
Enough from incommunicable dream,
And twilight phantasms, and deep noon-day thought,
Has shone within me, that serenely now
And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre
Suspended in the solitary dome
Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain
May modulate with murmurs of the air,
And motions of the forests and the sea,
And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

THERE was a Poet whose untimely tomb
No human hands with pious reverence reared,
But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds
Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid
Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness :
A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden decked
With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,
The lone couch of his everlasting sleep :

PART II Gentle, and brave, and generous,—no lorn bard
Alastor Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh :
He lived, he died, he sang, in solitude.
Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,
And virgins, as unknown he passed, have pined
And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.
The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,
And Silence, too enamoured of that voice,
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

¶ By solemn vision, and bright silver dream,
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.
The fountains of divine philosophy
Fled not his thirsting lips ; and all of great,
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew. When early youth had passed, he left
His cold fireside and alienated home
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness
Has lured his fearless steps ; and he has bought
With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,
His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps
He, like her shadow, has pursued where'er
The red volcano overcanopies
Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice
With burning smoke ; or where bitumen lakes

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PART II
Alastor

On black bare pointed islets ever beat
With sluggish surge ; or where the secret caves,
Rugged and dark, winding among the springs
Of fire and poison, inaccessible
To avarice or pride, their starry domes
Of diamond and of gold expand above
Numberless and immeasurable halls,
Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines
Of pearl, and stones radiant with chrysolite.
Nor had that scene of ampler majesty
Than gems of gold, the varying roof of heaven
And the green earth, lost in his heart its claims
To love and wonder ; he would linger long
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,
Until the doves and squirrels would partake
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,
And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
Her timid steps to gaze upon a form
More graceful than her own. ¶ His wandering step,
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
The awful ruins of the days of old :
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx,

PART II Dark Ethiopia in her desert hills

Alastor Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,
Stupendous columns, and wild images
Of more than man, where marble demons watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,
He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth, through the long burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades,
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.
¶ Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,
Her daily portion, from her father's tent,
And spread her matting for his couch, and stole
From duties and repose to tend his steps :
Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe
To speak her love :—and watched his nightly sleep,
Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips
Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath
Of innocent dreams arose : then, when red morn
Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home
Wildered, and wan, and panting, she returned.
¶ The Poet wandering on, through Arabie
And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,
And o'er the ærial mountains which pour down
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,

PART II
Alastor

In joy and exultation held his way ;
Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within
Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine
Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep
There came, a dream of hopes that never yet
Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid
Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
Heard in the calm of thought ; its music long,
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held
His inmost sense suspended in its web
Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.
Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,
Himself a poet. Soon the solemn mood
Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame
A permeating fire : wild numbers then
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs
Subdued by its own pathos : her fair hands
Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp
Strange symphony, and in their branching veins
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.
The beating of her heart was heard to fill
The pauses of her music, and her breath
Tumultuously accorded with those fits
Of intermitted song. Sudden she arose,

PART II As if her heart impatiently endured

Alastor Its bursting burthen : at the sound he turned,
And saw by the warm light of their own life
Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil
Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare,
Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,
Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips
Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly.
His strong heart sank and sickened with excess
Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled
His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet
Her panting bosom : she drew back awhile,
Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,
With frantic gesture and short breathless cry
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.
Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night
Involved and swallowed up the vision ; sleep
Like a dark flood suspended in its course,
Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.
¶ Roused by the shock he started from his trance.
The cold white light of morning, the blue moon
Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,
The distinct valley and the vacant woods,
Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled
The hues of Heaven that canopied his bower
Of yesternight ? The sounds that soothed his sleep,
The mystery and the majesty of Earth,
The joy, the exultation ? His wan eyes
Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly

As ocean's moon looks on the moon in Heaven.
The spirit of sweet human love has sent
A vision to the sleep of him who spurned
Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues
Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade ;
He overleaps the bounds. Alas ! alas !
Were limbs, and breath, and being intertwined
Thus treacherously ? Lost, lost, for ever lost,
In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,
That beautiful shape ! Does the dark gate of death
Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,
O Sleep ? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,
And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake,
Lead only to a black and watery depth,
While death's blue vault, with loathliest vapours hung,
Where every shade which the foul grave exhales
Hides its dead eye from the detested day,
Conduct, O Sleep, to thy delighted realms ?
This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart ;
The insatiate hope which it awakened stung
His brain even like despair. ¶ While daylight held
The sky, the Poet kept mute conference
With his still soul. At night the passion came,
Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream,
And shook him from his rest, and led him forth
Into the darkness. As an eagle, grasped
In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast
Burn with the poison, and precipitates
Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud,

PART II
Alastor

PART II Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight
Alastor O'er the wide æery wilderness ; thus driven
 By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,
 Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,
 Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,
 Startling with careless step the moonlight snake,
 He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight,
 Shedding the mockery of its vital hues
 Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on
 Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep
 Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud ;
 Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs
 Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind
 Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,
 Day after day, a weary waste of hours,
 Bearing within his life the brooding care
 That ever fed on its decaying flame.
 And now his limbs were lean ; his scattered hair,
 Sered by the autumn of strange suffering,
 Sung dirges in the wind ; his listless hand
 Hung like dead bone within its withered skin ;
 Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone,
 As in a furnace burning secretly,
 From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,
 Who ministered with human charity
 His human wants, beheld with wondering awe
 Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,
 Encountering on some dizzy precipice
 That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of Wind,

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PART II
Alastor

With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet
Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused
In its career ; the infant would conceal
His troubled visage in his mother's robe
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,
To remember their strange light in many a dream
Of after-times ; but youthful maidens, taught
By nature, would interpret half the woe
That wasted him, would call him with false names
Brother, and friend, would press his pallid hand
At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path
Of his departure from their father's door.
¶ At length upon the lone Chorasmian shore
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste
Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged
His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there,
Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.
It rose as he approached, and, with strong wings
Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course
High over the immeasurable main.
His eyes pursued its flight. Thou hast a home,
Beautiful bird ; thou voyagest to thine home,
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.
And what am I that I should linger here,
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers

PART II In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and Heaven
Alastor That echoes not my thoughts ? A gloomy smile
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.
For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly
Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,
Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,
With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms.
¶ Startled by his own thoughts he looked around.
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight
Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.
A little shallop floating near the shore
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze.
It had been long abandoned, for its sides
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints
Swayed with the undulations of the tide.
A restless impulse urged him to embark
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste ;
For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.
¶ The day was fair and sunny ; sea and sky
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves.
Following his eager soul, the wanderer
Leaped in the boat, he spread his cloak aloft
On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea
Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.
¶ As one that in a silver vision floats
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds

PART II

Alastor

Upon resplendent clouds so rapidly
Along the dark and ruffled waters fled
The straining boat. A whirlwind swept it on,
With fierce gusts and precipitating force,
Through the white ridges of the chafèd sea.
The waves arose. Higher and higher still
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the Tempest's
scourge
Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.
Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war
Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on blast
Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven
With dark obliterating course, he sate :
As if their genii were the ministers
Appointed to conduct him to the light
Of those belovèd eyes, the Poet sate
Holding the steady helm. Evening came on ;
The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues
High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray
That canopied his path o'er the waste deep ;
Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,
Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day ;
Night followed, clad with stars. On every side
More horribly the multitudinous streams
Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war
Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock
The calm and spangled sky. The little boat
Still fled before the storm ; still fled, like foam

PART II Down the steep cataract of a wintry river ;

Alastor Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave ;
Now leaving far behind the bursting mass
That fell, convulsing ocean : safely fled,
As if that frail and wasted human form
Had been an elemental god. ¶ At midnight
The moon arose : and lo ! the etherial cliffs
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone
Among the stars like sunlight, and around
Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves,
Bursting and eddying irresistibly,
Rage and resound for ever. Who shall save ?
The boat fled on, the boiling torrent drove,
The crags closed round with black and jagged arms,
The shattered mountain overhung the sea,
And faster still, beyond all human speed,
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,
The little boat was driven. A cavern there
Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths
Ingulphed the rushing sea. The boat fled on
With unrelaxing speed. Vision and Love !
The Poet cried aloud, I have beheld
The path of thy departure. Sleep and death
Shall not divide us long ! ¶ The boat pursued
The windings of the cavern. Daylight shone
At length upon that gloomy river's flow ;
Now, where the fiercest war among the waves
Is calm, on the unfathomable stream
The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven,

PART II

Alastor

Exposed those black depths to the azure sky,
Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell
Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass
Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm ;
Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,
Circling immeasurably fast, and laved
With alternating dash the gnarlèd roots
Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms
In darkness over it. I' the midst was left,
Reflecting, yet distorting, every cloud,
A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.
Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,
With dizzy swiftness, round, and round, and round,
Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,
Till on the verge of the extremest curve,
Where, through an opening of the rocky bank,
The waters overflow, and a smooth spot
Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides
Is left, the boat paused shuddering. Shall it sink
Down the abyss ? Shall the reverting stress
Of that resistless gulf embosom it ?
Now shall it fall ? A wandering stream of wind,
Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,
And, lo ! with gentle motion, between banks
Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,
Beneath a woven grove it sails, and, hark !
The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar
With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.

PART II Where the embowering trees recede, and leave

Alastor A little space of green expanse, the cove
Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers
For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes,
Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave
Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,
Which nought but vagrant bird, or wanton wind,
Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay
Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed
To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,
But on his heart its solitude returned,
And he forebore. Not the strong impulse hid
In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame,
Had yet performed its ministry : it hung
Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud
Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods
Of night close over it. ¶ The noonday sun
Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass
Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence
A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,
Scooped in the dark base of those æry rocks,
Mocking its moans respond and roar for ever.
The meeting boughs and implicated leaves
Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as led
By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,
He sought, in Nature's dearest haunt, some bank,
Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark
And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,

PART II

Alastor

Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
Of the tall cedar, overarching, frame
Most solemn domes within, and far below,
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
The ash and the acacia, floating, hang
Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed
In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around
The gray trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes,
With gentle meanings and most innocent wiles,
Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,
These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs,
Uniting their close union : the woven leaves
Make net-work of the dark blue light of day,
And the night's noontide clearness, mutable
As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns
Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms
Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen
Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jas-
mine,
A soul-dissolving odour, to invite
To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,
Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,
Like vaporous shapes half seen ; beyond, a well,
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,
Images all the woven boughs above,
And each depending leaf, and every speck

PART II Of azure sky, darting between their chasms ;
Alastor Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves
Its portraiture, but some inconstant star,
Between one foliated lattice twinkling fair,
Or painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon,
Or gorgeous insect, floating motionless,
Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings
Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.
¶ Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld
Their own wan light through the reflected lines
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth
Of that still fountain ; as the human heart,
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard
The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung
Startled, and glanced and trembled even to feel
An unaccustomed presence, and the sound
Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs
Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed
To stand beside him, clothed in no bright robes
Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,
Borrowed from aught the visible world affords
Of grace, or majesty, or mystery ;
But, undulating woods, and silent well,
And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,
Held commune with him, as if he and it
Were all that was : only, when his regard
Was raised by intense pensiveness, two eyes,

PART II
Alastor

Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,
And seemed with their serene and azure smiles
To beckon him. ¶ Obedient to the light
That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing
The windings of the dell. The rivulet,
Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine
Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell
Among the moss with hollow harmony,
Dark and profound. Now on the polished stones
It danced ; like childhood, laughing as it went :
Then, through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept,
Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
That overhung its quietness. O stream !
Whose source is inaccessibly profound,
Whither do thy mysterious waters tend ?
Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness,
Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulphs,
Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course,
Have each their type in me ; and the wide sky
And measureless ocean may declare as soon
What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud
Contains thy waters, as the universe
Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched
Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste
I' the passing wind ! ¶ Beside the grassy shore
Of the small stream he went ; he did impress
On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught
Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one
Roused by some joyous madness from the couch

PART II Of fever, he did move ; yet, not like him
Alastor Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame
Of his frail exultation shall be spent,
He must descend. With rapid steps he went
Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow
Of the wild babbling rivulet ; and now
The forest's solemn canopies were changed
For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.
Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed
The struggling brook : tall spires of windlestrae
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
And nought but gnarlèd roots of ancient pines
Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,
Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs : so from his steps
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued
The stream, that with a larger volume now
Rolled through the labyrinthine dell, and there
Fretted a path through its descending curves
With its wintry speed. On every side now rose
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
In the light of evening, and its precipice,
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,

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PART II
Alastor

Mid toppling stones, black gulfs and yawning caves,
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues
To the loud stream. Lo ! where the pass expands
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
And seems, with its accumulated crags,
To overhang the world : for wide expand
Beneath the wan stars and descending moon
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills,
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
In naked and severe simplicity,
Made contrast with the universe. A pine,
Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast
Yielding one only response, at each pause,
In most familiar cadence, with the howl
The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams
Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river,
Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,
Fell into that immeasurable void,
Scattering its waters to the passing winds.
¶ Yet the grey precipice and solemn pine
And torrent were not all ; one silent nook
Was there. Even on the edge of that vast mountain,
Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,
It overlooked in its serenity
The dark earth, and the bending vault of stars.

PART II It was a tranquil spot, that seemed to smile
Alastor Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped
The fissured stones with its entwining arms,
And did embower with leaves for ever green,
And berries dark, the smooth and even space
Of its inviolated floor ; and here
The children of the autumnal whirlwind bore,
In wanton sport, those bright leaves, whose decay,
Red, yellow, or aetherially pale,
Rivals the pride of summer. 'Tis the haunt
Of every gentle wind, whose breath can teach
The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,
One human step alone, has ever broken
The stillness of its solitude : one voice
Alone inspired its echoes ; even that voice
Which hither came, floating among the winds,
And led the loveliest among human forms
To make their wild haunts the depository
Of all the grace and beauty that endued
Its motions, render up its majesty,
Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,
And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould,
Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss,
Commit the colours of that varying cheek,
That snowy breast, those dark and drooping eyes.
¶ The dim and hornèd moon hung low, and poured
A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge
That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist
Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank
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PART II
Alastor

Wan moonlight even to fulness : not a star
Shone, not a sound was heard ; the very winds,
Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice
Slept, clasped in his embrace. O storm of death !
Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night :
And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still
Guiding its irresistible career
In thy devastating omnipotence,
Art king of this frail world ; from the red field
Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital,
The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed
Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,
A mighty voice invokes thee. Ruin calls
His brother Death. A rare and regal prey
He hath prepared, prowling around the world,
Glutted with which thou mayst repose, and men
Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,
Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.
¶ When on the threshold of the green recess
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,
Did he resign his high and holy soul
To images of the majestic past,
That paused within his passive being now,
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place
His pale lean hands upon the rugged trunk
Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone

PART II Reclined his languid head, his limbs did rest,
 Alastor Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink
 Of that obscurest chasm ; and thus he lay,
 Surrendering to their final impulses
 The hovering powers of life. Hope and despair,
 The torturers, slept ; no mortal pain or fear
 Marred his repose, the influxes of sense,
 And his own being unalloyed by pain,
 Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed
 The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there
 At peace, and faintly smiling : his last sight
 Was the great moon, which o'er the western line
 Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,
 With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed
 To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills
 It rests, and still, as the divided frame
 Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,
 That ever beat in mystic sympathy
 With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still :
 And, when two lessening points of light alone
 Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp
 Of his faint respiration scarce did stir
 The stagnate night : till the minutest ray
 Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.
 It paused, it fluttered. But when Heaven remained
 Utterly black, the murky shades involved
 An image, silent, cold, and motionless,
 As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.
 Even as a vapour fed with golden beams

PART II
Alastor

That ministered on sunlight, ere the west
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame,
No sense, no motion, no divinity ;
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings
The breath of Heaven did wander, a bright stream
Once fed with many-voicèd waves, a dream
Of youth, which night and time have quenched for
ever,

Still, dark and dry, and unremembered now.

¶ Oh for Medea's wondrous alchemy,
Which, wheresoe'er it fell, made the earth gleam
With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale
From vernal blooms fresh fragrance ! Oh that God,
Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice
Which but one living man has drained, who now,
Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels
No proud exemption in the blighting curse
He bears, over the world wanders for ever,
Lone as incarnate death ! Oh that the dream
Of dark magician in his visioned cave,
Raking the cinders of a crucible
For life and power, even when his feeble hand
Shakes in its last decay, were the true law
Of this so lovely world ! But thou art fled
Like some frail exhalation which the dawn
Robes in its golden beams, ah ! thou hast fled !
The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,
The child of grace and genius. Heartless things
Are done and said i' the world, and many worms

PART II And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth,
Alastor From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,
In vesper low or joyous orison,
Lifts still its solemn voice : but thou art fled ;
Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes
Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee
Been purest ministers, who are, alas !
Now thou art not. Upon those pallid lips
So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes
That image sleep in death, upon that form
Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear
Be shed, not even in thought. Nor, when those hues
Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,
Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone
In the frail pauses of this simple strain,
Let not high verse, mourning the memory
Of that which is no more, or painting's woe
Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence,
And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain
To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.
It is a woe too deep for tears, when all
Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope ;
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

PART III. ADONAIIS: AN ELEGY ON
THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS

Ἄστηρ πρὶν μὲν ἑλάμπες ἐνὶ ζῳοῖσιν ἑως,
Νυν δὲ θανὼν, λαμπρὸς ἑσπερὸς ἐν φθιμένοις.

PART III I WEEP for Adonais—he is dead !

Adonais Oh weep for Adonais ! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head !
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow ! Say : With me
Died Adonais ; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity !

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness ? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died ? With veiled eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of death.

Oh weep for Adonais—he is dead !
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep !
Yet wherefore ? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep ;
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend ; Oh dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air ;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our
despair.

PART III
Adonais

Most musical of mourners, weep again !
Lament anew, Urania ! He died,
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite
Of lust and blood ; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death : but his clear sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth ; the third among the Sons of Light.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew !
Not all to that bright station dared to climb ;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished ; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime ;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene
abode.

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has perished,
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
And fed with true love tears, instead of dew ;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew !
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals, nipt before they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste ;
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

PART III To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Adonais Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came ; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal. Come away !
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof, while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay ;
Awake him not ! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

He will awake no more, oh, never more !
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place ;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness and the law
Of change shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

Oh weep for Adonais ! The quick Dreams,
The passion-wingèd Ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not,
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung ; and mourn
their lot

Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.
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And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head, PART III
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries ; Adonais
Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead ;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise !
She knew not 'twas her own ; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs, as if embalming them ;
Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem ;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak ;
And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music ; the damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips ;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its
eclipse.

PART III And others came, Desires and Adorations,
Adonais Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies ;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp : the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watchtower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the ærial eyes that kindle day ;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay ;
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day,
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds : a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down PART III
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were, Adonais
Or they dead leaves ; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year ?
To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear,
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais : wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears ; odour, to sighing ruth.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale,
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain ;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee : the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest !

Ah, woe is me ! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year ;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone ;
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear ;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier ;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere ;
And the green lizard and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

PART III Through wood and stream and field and hill and ocean

Adonais A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos : in its stream immersed
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light ;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst,
Diffuse themselves and spend, in love's delight,
The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath ;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath.
Nought we know dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning ? th' intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

Alas ! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal ! Woe is me !
Whence are we, and why are we ? of what scene
The actors or spectators ? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year
to sorrow.

PART III

Adonais

He will awake no more, oh, never more !
Wake thou, cried Misery, childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his with tears and sighs.
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried : Arise !
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East and follows, wild and drear,
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania ;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist ; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human hearts, which, to her æery tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell :
And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than
they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

PART III In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
Adonais Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night !
Leave me not ! cried Urania : her distress
Roused Death : Death rose and smiled, and met her
vain caress.

Stay yet awhile ! speak to me once again :
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live ;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais ! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art !
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart !

O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den ?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh ! where was then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear ?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

PART III

Adonais

The herded wolves, bold only to pursue ;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead ;
The vultures, to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion ; how they fled,
When, like Apollo from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled ! The spoilers tempt no second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn ;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered unto death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again ;
So is it in the world of living men ;
A godlike mind soars forth in its delight,
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.

Thus ceased she : and the mountain shepherds came
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent ;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow ; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

PART III 'Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,

Adonais A phantom among men, companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell ; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness ;
And his own thoughts along that rugged way
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift,
A Love in desolation masked, a Power
Girt round with weakness, it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour ;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow ; even whilst we speak
Is it not broken ? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly : on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may
break.

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue ;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it ; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart ;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears ; well knew that gentle band Adonais
Who in another's fate now wept his own,
As, in the accents of an unknown land,
He sang new sorrow ; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured : Who art thou ?
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's. Oh that it should
be so !

What softer voice is hushed over the dead ?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown ?
What form leans sadly o'er the white deathbed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan ?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh !
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe ?
The nameless worm would now itself disown :
It felt, yet could escape the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

PART III Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame !

Adonais Live ! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered name !
 But be thyself, and know thyself to be !
 And ever at thy season be thou free
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow :
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee ;
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream below ;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead ;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.
Dust to the dust ! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of
 shame.

Peace, peace ! he is not dead, he doth not sleep,
He hath awakened from the dream of life ;
'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings. We decay
Like corpses in a charnel ; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

PART III

Adonais

He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again ;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain ;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he !
Mourn not for Adonais. Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone ;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan !
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyless stars which smile on its despair !

He is made one with Nature : there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird ;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own ;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

PART III He is a portion of the loveliness

Adonais Which once he made more lovely : he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear ;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear ;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

The splendours of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not ;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him ; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved,
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose ; and Lucan, by his death approved :
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reprov'd.

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
Thou art become as one of us, they cry :
It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid a Heaven of Song.
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng !

PART III
Adonais

Who mourns for Adonais ? Oh come forth,
Fond wretch ! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth ;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Sate the void circumference : then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night ;
And keep thy heart light, lest it make thee sink
When hope has kindled hope and lured thee to the
brink.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy : 'tis nought
That ages, empires, and religions, there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought ;
For such as he can lend, they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey ;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

PART III Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,

Adonais The grave, the city, and the wilderness ;
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
And flowering weeds and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand ;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilions the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble ; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished
breath.

Here pause : these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each ; and if the seal is set
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou ! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become ?

The One remains, the many change and pass ;
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly ;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek !
Follow where all is fled ! Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

PART III
Adonais

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart ?
Thy hopes are gone before ; from all things here
They have departed : thou shouldst now depart !
A light is past from the revolving year,
And man, and woman ; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles, the low wind whispers near ;
'Tis Adonais calls ! oh hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

That light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which, through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

PART III The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Adonais Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven !
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar ;
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

PART IV. THE EVERLASTING UNIVERSE

LISTEN, listen, Mary mine, ; -
To the whisper of the Apennine,
It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,
Or like the sea on a northern shore,
Heard in its raging ebb and flow
By the captives pent in the cave below.
The Apennine in the light of day
Is a mighty mountain dim and grey,
Which between the earth and sky doth lay ;
But when night comes, a chaos dread
On the dim starlight then is spread,
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm.

I

THE sleepless hours who watch me as I lie,
Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries,
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,
Waken me when their Mother, the grey Dawn,
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

PART IV

i. i.

II

Then I arise, and, climbing Heaven's blue dome,
I walk over the mountains and the waves,
Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam ;
My footsteps pave the clouds with fire ; the caves
Are filled with my bright presence, and the air
Leaves the green earth to my embraces bare.

III

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day ;
All men who do or even imagine ill
Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
Good minds and open actions take new might,
Until diminished by the reign of night.

IV

I feed the clouds, the rainbows, and the flowers,
With their aetherial colours ; the Moon's globe
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
Are cinctured with my power as with a robe ;
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

V

PART IV I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,

i. 1. Then with unwilling steps I wander down
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even ;

For grief that I depart they weep and frown :
What look is more delightful than the smile
With which I soothe them from the western isle ?

VI

I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself and knows it is divine ;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medicine, is mine,
All light of art or nature ; to my song
Victory and praise in its own right belong.

I

FROM the forests and highlands

We come, we come ;

From the river-girt islands,

Where loud waves are dumb

Listening to my sweet pipings.

The wind in the reeds and the rushes,

The bees on the bells of thyme,

The birds on the myrtle bushes,

The cicale above in the lime,

And the lizards below in the grass,

Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,

Listening to my sweet pipings.

PART IV

i. 2

II

Liquid Penëus was flowing,

And all dark Tempe lay

In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing

The light of the dying day

Speeded with my sweet pipings.

The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,

And the Nymphs of the woods and waves,

To the edge of the moist river-lawns,

And the brink of the dewy caves,

And all that did then attend and follow,

Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,

With envy of my sweet pipings.

III

PART IV

i. 2

I sang of the dancing stars,
I sang of the daedal Earth,
And of Heaven and the Giant wars,
And Love, and Death, and Birth ;
And then I changed my pipings,
Singing how down the vale of Maenalus
I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed.
Gods and men, we are all deluded thus !
It breaks in our bosom, and then we bleed.
All wept, as I think both ye now would,
If envy or age had not frozen your blood,
At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

I

ARETHUSA arose

From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains,
From cloud and from crag,
With many a jag,
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks,
With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams ;
Her steps paved with green
The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams :
And gliding and springing
She went, ever singing,
In murmurs as soft as sleep ;
The Earth seemed to love her,
And Heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.

II

Then Alpheus bold,
On his glacier cold,
With his trident the mountain strook,
And opened a chasm
In the rocks ; with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook.
And the black south wind
It unsealed behind
The urns of the silent snow,

PART IV

i. 3

PART IV

i. 3

And earthquake and thunder
Did rend in sunder
The bars of the springs below.
And the beard and the hair
Of the River-god were
Seen through the torrent's sweep,
As he followed the light
Of the fleet nymph's flight
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

III

Oh save me ! Oh guide me !
And bid the deep hide me,
For he grasps me now by the hair !
The loud Ocean heard,
To its blue depths stirred,
And divided at her prayer ;
And under the water
The Earth's white daughter
Fled like a sunny beam ;
Behind her descended
Her billows, unblended
With the brackish Dorian stream :
Like a gloomy stain
On the emerald main
Alpheus rushed behind,
As an eagle pursuing
A dove to its ruin
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

IV

Under the bowers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearlèd thrones ;
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones ;
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams
Weave a network of coloured light ;
And under the caves,
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night :
Outspeeding the shark,
And the sword-fish dark,
Under the ocean foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain cliffs
They passed to their Dorian home.

V

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning basks,
Like friends once parted
Grown single-hearted,
They ply their watery tasks.
At sunrise they leap
From their cradles steep
In the cave of the shelving hill ;

PART IV

i. 3

PART IV

i. 3

At noon-tide they flow
Through the woods below
And the meadows of Asphodel;
And at night they sleep
In the rocking deep
Beneath the Ortygian shore;
Like spirits that lie
In the azure sky
When they love but live no more.

I

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams ;
 I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noonday dreams.
 From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
 The sweet buds every one,
 When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.
 I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under,
 And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

PART IV

i. 4

II

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
 And their great pines groan aghast ;
 And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
 Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
 Lightning my pilot sits,
 In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
 It struggles and howls at fits :
 Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
 This pilot is guiding me,
 Lured by the love of the genii that move
 In the depths of the purple sea ;
 Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
 Over the lakes and the plains,

PART IV Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,

i. 4 The Spirit he loves remains ;
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

III

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

IV

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn ;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,

May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer ;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

PART IV

i. 4

V

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl ;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be,
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow ;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist Earth was laughing below.

VI

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And nursling of the sky ;

PART IV I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;

i. 4 I change, but I cannot die.

For after the rain, when with never a stain

The pavilion of heaven is bare,

And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams

Build up the blue dome of air,

I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,

And out of the caverns of rain,

Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,

I arise and unbuild it again.

I

SACRED Goddess, Mother Earth,

Thou from whose immortal bosom,
Gods, and men, and beasts have birth,

Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom,
Breathe thine influence most divine
On thine own child, Proserpine.

PART IV

i. 5

II

If with mists of evening dew

Thou dost nourish these young flowers
Till they grow, in scent and hue,

Fairest children of the Hours,
Breathe thine influence most divine
On thine own child, Proserpine.

PART IV

ii. I

I

ECHOES we : listen !

We cannot stay :
As dew-stars glisten
Then fade away—
Child of Ocean !

II

Oh follow, follow,
As our voice recedeth
Thro' the caverns hollow,
Where the forest spreadeth ;
(*More distant*)
Oh follow, follow !
Thro' the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
Where the wild bee never flew,
Thro' the noontide darkness deep,
By the odour-breathing sleep
Of faint night flowers, and the waves
At the fountain-lighted caves,
While our music, wild and sweet,
Mocks thy gently-falling feet,
Child of Ocean !

III

In the world unknown
Sleeps a voice unspoken ;
By thy step alone
Can its rest be broken ;
Child of Ocean !

IV

Oh follow, follow !

Thro' the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noontide dew ;
By the forests, lakes, and fountains,
Thro' the many-folded mountains ;
To the rents, and gulphs, and chasms,
Where the earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and thou
Parted, to commingle now ;
Child of Ocean !

PART IV

ii. 1

I

PART IV

ii. 2

THE path thro' which that lovely twain
 Have past, by cedar, pine, and yew,
 And each dark tree that ever grew,
 Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue ;
 Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
 Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
 Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,
 Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
 Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
 Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers
 Of the green laurel, blown anew ;
 And bends, and then fades silently,
 One frail and fair anemone :
 Or when some star of many a one
 That climbs and wanders thro' steep night,
 Has found the cleft thro' which alone
 Beams fall from high those depths upon
 Ere it is borne away, away,
 By the swift Heavens that cannot stay ;
 It scatters drops of golden light,
 Like lines of rain that ne'er unite :
 And the gloom divine is all around.
 And underneath is the mossy ground.

II

There the voluptuous nightingales,
 Are awake thro' all the broad noonday.
 When one with bliss or sadness fails,
 And thro' the windless ivy-boughs,

Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
On its mate's music-panting bosom ;
Another from the swinging blossom,
 Watching to catch the languid close
Of the last strain, then lifts on high
The wings of the weak melody,
'Till some new strain of feeling bear
The song, and all the woods are mute ;
When there is heard thro' the dim air
The rush of wings, and rising there
 Like many a lake-surrounded flute,
Sounds overflow the listener's brain
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

PART IV

ii. 2

III

There those enchanted eddies play
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
By Demogorgon's mighty law,
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
All spirits on that secret way ;
As inland boats are driven to Ocean
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw :
 And first there comes a gentle sound
To those in talk or slumber bound,
And wakes the destined : soft emotion
Attracts, impels them : those who saw
Say from the breathing earth behind
There steams a plume-uplifting wind
Which drives them on their path, while they

PART IV

ii. 2

Believe their own swift wings and feet
The sweet desires within obey :
And so they float upon their way,
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
The storm of sound is driven along,
Sucked up and hurrying : as they fleet,
Behind its gathering billows meet
And to the fatal mountain bear
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

TO the deep, to the deep,
Down, down !
Through the shade of Sleep,
Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life ;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are,
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down !

PART IV

ii. 3

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down !
As the fawn draws the hound,
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper ;
Death, Despair ; Love, Sorrow ;
Time both ; to-day, to-morrow ;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,
Down, down !

Through the grey, void Abysm,
Down, down !
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern crags wear not
The radiance of Heaven,
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is One pervading, One alone,
Down, down !

PART IV

ii. 3

In the depth of the deep
Down, down !
Like veiled lightning asleep,
Like the spark nursed in embers,
The last look Love remembers,
Like a diamond which shines
On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasured but for thee alone.
Down, down !

I

MY coursers are fed with the lightning,
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is bright'ning
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam ;
They have strength for their swiftness I deem ;
Then ascend with me, Daughter of Ocean.

PART IV

ii. 4

II

I desire : and their speed makes night kindle ;
I fear : they outstrip the Typhoon ;
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle
We encircle the earth and the moon :
We shall rest from long labours at noon :
Then ascend with me, Daughter of Ocean.

III

On the brink of the night and the morning
My coursers are wont to respire ;
But the Earth has just whispered a warning
That their flight must be swifter than fire :
They shall drink the hot speed of desire !
Then ascend with me, Daughter of Ocean.

PART IV

ii. 5

I

LIFE of Life ! thy lips enkindle

With their love the breath between them ;
And thy smiles before they dwindle

Make the cold air fire, then screen them
In those looks, where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

II

Child of Light ! thy limbs are burning

Thro' the vest which seems to hide them ;
As the radiant lines of morning

Through the clouds ere they divide them ;
And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

III

Fair are others ; none beholds thee,

But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee

From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever !

IV

Lamp of Earth ! where'er thou movest

Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,
And the souls of whom thou lovest

Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing !

I

MY soul is an enchanted Boat,
 Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
 Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing ;
 And thine doth like an angel sit
 Beside the helm conducting it,
 Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
 It seems to float ever, for ever,
 Upon that many-winding river,
 Between mountains, woods, abysses,
 A Paradise of wildernesses !
 Till, like one in slumber bound,
 Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
 Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound :

PART IV

ii. 6

II

Meanwhile thy Spirit lifts its pinions
 In Music's most serene dominions ;
 Catching the winds that fan that happy Heaven.
 And we sail on, away, afar,
 Without a course, without a star,
 But by the instinct of sweet music driven ;
 Till through Elysian garden islets
 By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
 Where never mortal pinnacle glided,
 The boat of my desire is guided :
 Realms where the air we breathe is Love,
 Which in the winds and on the waves doth move,
 Harmonising this earth with what we feel above.

I

PART IV THE everlasting universe of things

iii. I Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark, now glittering, now reflecting gloom,
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings
Of waters, with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve, dark, deep Ravine,
Thou many-coloured, many-voicèd vale,
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams : awful scene,
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice gulfs that gird his secret throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning through the tempest ; thou dost lie,
Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,
Children of elder time, in whose devotion
The chainless winds still come and ever came
To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
To hear, an old and solemn harmony ;
Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep
Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil
Robes some unsculptured image ; the strange sleep

150

PART IV

iii. I

Which when the voices of the desert fail
Wraps all in its own deep eternity ;
Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion,
A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame ;
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
Thou art the path of that unresting sound,
Dizzy Ravine ! and when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate fantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear Universe of Things around ;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by,
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
Some phantom, some faint image ; till the breast
From which they fled recalls them, thou art there !

III

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep, that death is slumber,
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
Of those who wake and live. I look on high ;
Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled
The veil of life and death ? or do I lie

PART IV In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep

iii. 1 Spread far around and inaccessibly
Its circles ? For the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales !
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,
Mont Blanc appears, still, snowy, and serene.
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile around it, ice and rock ; broad vales between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
Blue as the overhanging Heaven, that spread
And wind among the accumulated steeps ;
A desert, peopled by the storms alone
Save when the eagle brings some hunters' bone
And the wolf tracks her there : how hideously
Its shapes are heaped around ! rude, bare, and high,
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven. Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-daemon taught her young
Ruin ? Were these their toys ? or did a sea
Of fire envelope once this silent snow ?
None can reply, all seems eternal now.
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
So solemn, so serene, that man may be,
In such a faith, with Nature reconciled.
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe ; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV

PART IV

iii. I

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
 Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
 Within the daedal earth ; lightning, and rain,
 Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane ;
 The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
 Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
 Holds every future leaf and flower ; the bound
 With which from that detested trance they leap ;
 The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
 And that of him and all that his may be :
 All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
 Are born and die ; revolve, subside, and swell.
 Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
 Remote, serene, and inaccessible :
 And this, the naked countenance of earth,
 On which I gaze, even these primaeval mountains,
 Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep,
 Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far foun-
 tains,
 Slow rolling on ; there, many a precipice,
 Frost and the Sun, in scorn of mortal power,
 Have piled, dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
 A city of death, distinct with many a tower
 And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
 Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
 Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
 Rolls its perpetual stream ; vast pines are strewing
 Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
 Branchless and shattered stand ; the rocks, drawn down

PART IV From yon remotest waste, have overthrown

iii. 1 The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil ;
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race
Of man flies far in dread ; his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves
Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
Which from their secret chasms in tumult welling
Meet in the Vale ; and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

V

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high : the Power is there,
The still and solemn Power of many sights,
And many sounds, and much of life and death.
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain ; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them. Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
Rapid and strong, but silently. Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods

Over the snow. The secret Strength of Things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee.
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy ?

PART IV

iii. I

PART IV

iii. 2

I

MANY a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of Misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on
Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round the vessel's track ;
Whilst, the sunless sky,
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,
And behind, the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
Till the ship has almost drank
Death from the o'er-brimming deep ;
And sinks down, down, like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity ;
And the dim low line, before,
Of a dark and distant shore
Still recedes, as ever still
Longing with divided will,
But no power to seek or shun,
He is ever drifted on
O'er the unreposing wave
To the haven of the grave.

II

Ay, many flowering islands lie

In the waters of wide Agony :
To such a one this morn was led :
My bark, by soft winds piloted :
'Mid the mountains Euganean
I stood listening to the paean,
With which the legioned rocks did hail
The sun's uprise majestic ;
Gathering round with wings all hoar,
Thro' the dewy mist they soar
Like grey shades, till the eastern Heaven
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,
Flecked with fire and azure, lie
In the unfathomable sky,
So their plumes of purple grain,
Starred with drops of golden rain,
Gleam above the sunlight woods,
As in silent multitudes
On the morning's fitful gale
Thro' the broken mist they sail,
And the vapours cloven and gleaming
Follow, down the dark steep streaming,
Till all is bright, and clear, and still,
Round the solitary hill.
¶ Beneath is spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy,
Bounded by the vaporious air,
Islanded by cities fair ;
Underneath Day's azure eyes
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,

PART IV

iii. 2

PART IV

iii. 2

A peopled labyrinth of walls,
Amphitrite's destined halls,
Which her hoary sire now paves
With his blue and beaming waves.
Lo ! the sun upsprings behind,
Broad, red, radiant, half reclined
On the level quivering line
Of the waters crystalline ;
And before that chasm of light,
As within a furnace bright,
Column, tower, and dome, and spire,
Shine like obelisks of fire,
Pointing with inconstant motion
From the altar of dark ocean
To the sapphire-tinted skies ;
As the flames of sacrifice
From the marble shrines did rise,
As to pierce the dome of gold
Where Apollo spoke of old.
¶ Sun-girt City, thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his Queen ;
Now is come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey,
If the Power that raised thee here
Hallow so thy watery bier.
A less drear ruin than now,
With thy conquest-branded brow
Stooping to the slave of slaves
From thy throne, among the waves,

Wilt thou be when the sea-mew
Flies, as once before it flew,
O'er thine isles depopulate,
And all is in its ancient state,
Save where many a palace gate
With green sea-flowers overgrown
Like a rock of ocean's own,
Topples o'er the abandoned sea
As the tides change sullenly.
The fisher on his watery way,
Wandering at the close of day,
Will spread his sail and seize his oar
Till he pass the gloomy shore,
Lest thy dead should, from their sleep
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
Lead a rapid masque of death
O'er the waters of his path.

PART IV

iii. 2

III

Noon descends around me now :
'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist
Like a vaporous amethyst,
Or an air-dissolvèd star
Mingling light and fragrance, far
From the curved horizon's bound
To the point of heaven's profound,
Fills the overflowing sky.
And the plains that silent lie

PART IV

iii. 2

Underneath, the leaves unsodden
Where the infant frost has trodden
With his morning-wingèd feet,
Whose bright print is gleaming yet ;
And the red and golden vines,
Piercing with their trellised lines
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness ;
The dun and bladed grass no less,
Pointing from this hoary tower
In the windless air ; the flower
Glimmering at my feet ; the line
Of the olive-sandalled Apennine
In the south dimly islanded ;
And the Alps, whose snows are spread
High between the clouds and sun ;
And of living things each one ;
And my spirit which so long
Darkened this swift stream of song,
Interpenetrated lie
By the glory of the sky :
Be it love, light, harmony,
Odour, or the soul of all
Which from heaven like dew doth fall,
Or the mind which feeds this verse
Peopling the lone universe.

IV

Noon descends and after noon
Autumn's evening meets me soon,

Leading the infantine moon,
And that one star, which to her
Almost seems to minister
Half the crimson light she brings
From the sunset's radiant springs :
And the soft dreams of the morn
(Which like wingèd winds had borne
To that silent isle, which lies
'Mid remembered agonies,
The frail bark of this lone being)
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
And its ancient pilot, Pain,
Sits beside the helm again.

PART IV

iii. 2

V

Other flowering isles must be
In the sea of Life and Agony :
Other spirits float and flee
O'er that gulph : even now, perhaps,
On some rock the wild wave wraps,
With folded wings they waiting sit
For my bark, to pilot it
To some calm and blooming cove,
Where for me, and those I love,
May a windless bower be built,
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,
In a dell 'mid lawny hills,
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
And soft sunshine, and the sound

PART IV

iii. 2

Of old forests echoing round,
And the light and smell divine
Of all flowers that breathe and shine.
We may live so happy there,
That the Spirits of the Air,
Envying us, may even entice
To our healing paradise
The polluting multitude ;
But their rage would be subdued
By that clime divine and calm,
And the winds whose wings rain balm
On the uplifted soul, and leaves
Under which the bright sea heaves ;
While each breathless interval
In their whisperings musical
The inspirèd soul supplies
With its own deep melodies ;
And the love, which heals all strife,
Circling, like the breath of life,
All things in that sweet abode
With its own mild brotherhood :
They, not it would change ; and soon
Every sprite beneath the moon
Would repent its envy vain,
And the earth grow young again.

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit !

Bird thou never wert,

That from Heaven, or near it,

Pourest thy full heart

In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

PART IV

iii. 3

Higher and still higher,

From the earth thou springest

Like a cloud of fire ;

The blue deep thou wingest,

And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning

Of the sunken sun,

O'er which clouds are brightening,

Thou dost float and run ;

Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even

Melts around thy flight ;

Like a star of Heaven,

In the broad daylight

Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows

Of that silver sphere,

Whose intense lamp narrows

In the white dawn clear,

Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

PART IV

iii. 3

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is over-
flowed.

What thou art we know not ;
What is most like thee ?
From rainbow-clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody :

Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not :

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace-tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower :

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its ærial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the
view :

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered
 Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingèd
 thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
 All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine :
I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal,
 Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
 But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain ?
What fields, or waves, or mountains ?
 What shapes of sky or plain ?
What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ?

PART IV

iii. 3

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be :
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee :
Thou lovest ; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not :
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught ;
Oursweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear,
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,

The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

PART IV

iii. 3

PART IV O WILD west wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,

iii. 4 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O thou
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill :
Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere ;
Destroyer and preserver ; hear, Oh hear !

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like Earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,
Angels of rain and lightning : there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head
Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge
Of the dying Year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might
Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst : Oh hear !

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,
Beside a pumice-isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them ! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean know
Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves : Oh hear !

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable ! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be
The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision ; I would ne'er have striven
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !
I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !
A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

PART IV Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :

iii. 4 What if my leaves are falling like its own !
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !
And, by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
Be through my lips to unawakened Earth
The trumpet of a prophecy ! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

PART V. MAN EMANCIPATE

TO suffer woes which hope thinks infinite ;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent ;
To love, and bear ; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent ;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free ;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

SO now my summer task is ended, Mary,

PART V

And I return to thee, mine own heart's home; i. 1

As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faëry,

Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome;

Nor thou disdain that, ere my fame become

A star among the stars of mortal night,

If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,

Its doubtful promise thus I would unite

With thy belovèd name, thou Child of love and light.

The toil which stole from thee so many an hour

Is ended—and the fruit is at thy feet!

No longer where the woods to frame a bower

With interlacèd branches mix and meet,

Or where, with sound like many voices sweet,

Waterfalls leap among wild islands green

Which framed for my lone boat a lone retreat

Of moss-grown trees and weeds, shall I be seen:

But beside thee, where still my heart has ever been.

Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear Friend,
when first

The clouds which wrap this world from youth
did pass.

I do remember well the hour which burst

My spirit's sleep: a fresh May-dawn it was,

When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,

And wept, I knew not why: until there rose

From the near schoolroom voices that, alas!

PART V Were but one echo from a world of woes—
i. 1 The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

And then I clasped my hands, and looked around,
But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground.
So, without shame, I spake : I will be wise,
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
Such power, for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannise
Without reproach or check. I then controlled
My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

And from that hour did I with earnest thought
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore,
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
I cared to learn, but from that secret store
Wrought linkèd armour for my soul, before
It might walk forth to war among mankind ;
Thus power and hope were strengthened more
and more
Within me, till there came upon my mind
A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined.

Alas that love should be a blight and snare
To those who seek all sympathies in one !
Such once I sought in vain ; then black despair,
The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
Over the world in which I moved alone :

Yet never found I one not false to me,

PART V

Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone

i. i

Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be
Aught but a lifeless clog, until revived by thee.

Thou Friend, whose presence on my wintry heart

Fell, like bright Spring upon some herbless plain,

How beautiful and calm and free thou wert

In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain

Of custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,

And walked as free as light the clouds among,

Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain

From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung

To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long !

No more alone through the world's wilderness,

Although I trod the paths of high intent,

I journeyed now ; no more companionless,

Where solitude is like despair, I went.

There is the wisdom of a stern content

When Poverty can blight the just and good,

When Infamy dares mock the innocent,

And cherished friends turn with the multitude

To trample : this was ours, and we unshaken stood !

Now has descended a serener hour,

And, with inconstant fortune, friends return ;

Though suffering leaves the knowledge and the power

Which says : Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.

PART V

il. 1

And from thy side two gentle babes are born
To fill our home with smiles, and thus are we
Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn :
And these delights, and thou, have been to me
The parents of the Song I consecrate to thee.

Is it that now my inexperienced fingers
But strike the prelude of a loftier strain ?
Or must the lyre on which my spirit lingers
Soon pause in silence, ne'er to sound again,
Though it might shake the Anarch Custom's reign,
And charm the minds of men to Truth's own sway,
Holier than was Amphion's ? I would fain
Reply in hope—but I am worn away,
And Death and Love are yet contending for their prey.

And what art thou ? I know, but dare not speak :
Time may interpret to his silent years.
Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek,
And in the light thine ample forehead wears,
And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy tears,
And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy
Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears :
And, through thine eyes, even in thy soul I see
A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth,
Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child.
I wonder not—for One then left this earth

Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled
Of its departing glory ; still her fame
Shines on thee, through the tempests dark and wild
Which shake these latter days ; and thou canst claim
The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name.

One voice came forth from many a mighty spirit
Which was the echo of three thousand years ;
And the tumultuous world stood mute to hear it,
As some lone man who in a desert hears
The music of his home : unwonted fears
Fell on the pale oppressors of our race,
And Faith and Custom and low-thoughted cares,
Like thunder-stricken dragons, for a space
Left the torn human heart, their food and dwelling-
place.

Truth's deathless voice pauses among mankind !
If there must be no response to my cry,
If men must rise and stamp, with fury blind,
On his pure name who loves them, thou and I,
Sweet Friend ! can look from our tranquillity
Like lamps into the world's tempestuous night,
Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by
Which wrap them from the foundering seaman's
sight,
That burn from year to year with unextinguished
light.

PART V WHEN the last hope of trampled France had
i. 2 failed

Like a brief dream of unremaining glory,
From visions of despair I rose, and scaled
The peak of an æriel promontory,
Whose caverned base with the vext surge was
hoary ;
And saw the golden dawn break forth, and waken
Each cloud and every wave :—but transitory
The calm : for sudden the firm earth was shaken,
As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken.

So as I stood, one blast of muttering thunder
Burst in far peals along the waveless deep,
When, gathering fast, around, above, and under,
Long trails of tremulous mist began to creep,
Until their complicating lines did steep
The orient sun in shadow :—not a sound
Was heard ; one horrible repose did keep
The forests and the floods, and all around
Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the
ground.

Hark ! 'tis the rushing of a wind that sweeps
Earth and the ocean. See ! the lightnings yawn
Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps
Glitter and boil beneath : it rages on,
One mighty stream, whirlwind and waves up-
thrown,

Lightning and hail and darkness eddying by.

PART V

There is a pause—the sea-birds, that were gone

i. 2

Into their caves to shriek, come forth to spy,

What calm has fallen on earth, what light is in the sky.

For, where the irresistible storm had cloven

That fearful darkness, the blue sky was seen

Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven

Most delicately, and the ocean green,

Beneath that opening spot of blue serene,

Quivered like burning emerald : calm was spread

On all below ; but far on high, between

Earth and the upper air, the vast clouds fled,

Countless and swift as leaves on Autumn's tempest shed.

For ever, as the war became more fierce

Between the whirlwinds and the rack on high,

That spot grew more serene ; blue light did pierce

The woof of those white clouds, which seemed to
lie

Far, deep, and motionless ; while through the sky

The pallid semicircle of the moon

Passed on, in slow and moving majesty ;

Its upper horn arrayed in mists, which soon

But slowly fled, like dew beneath the beams of noon.

I could not choose but gaze ; a fascination

Dwelt in that moon and sky and clouds, which
drew

PART V My fancy thither, and in expectation

i. 2 Of what, I knew not, I remained : the hue
Of the white moon, amid that Heaven so blue,
Suddenly stained with shadow did appear ;
A speck, a cloud, a shape, approaching grew,
Like a great ship in the sun's sinking sphere
Beheld afar at sea, and swift it came anear.

Even like a bark, which from a chasm of mountains,
Dark, vast, and overhanging, on a river
Which there collects the strength of all its fountains,
Comes forth, whilst with the speed its frame doth
quiver,
Sails, oars, and stream, tending to one endeavour ;
So, from that chasm of light a wingèd Form,
On all the winds of Heaven approaching ever,
Floated, dilating as it came : the storm
Pursued it with fierce blasts, and lightnings swift and
warm.

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed,
Suspending thought and breath ; a monstroussight!
For in the air do I behold indeed
An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight :
And now, relaxing its impetuous flight
Before the aërial rock on which I stood,
The Eagle, hovering, wheeled to left and right,
And hung with lingering wings over the flood,
And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.

A shaft of light upon its wings descended,
And every golden feather gleamed therein,
Feather and scale inextricably blended.

PART V

i. 2

The Serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin
Shone through the plumes its coils were twined
within
By many a swoln and knotted fold, and high
And far the neck, receding lithe and thin,
Sustained a crested head, which warily
Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's steadfast eye.

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling
With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle
sailed
Incessantly—sometimes on high concealing
Its lessening orbs, sometimes, as if it failed,
Drooped through the air ; and still it shrieked
and wailed,
And, casting back its eager head, with beak
And talon unremittingly assailed
The wreathèd Serpent, who did ever seek
Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

What life, what power, was kindled and arose
Within the sphere of that appalling fray !
For, from the encounter of those wondrous foes,
A vapour like the sea's suspended spray
Hung gathered : in the void air, far away,
Floated the shattered plumes : bright scales did leap,

PART V Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,
i. 2 Like sparks into the darkness ;—as they sweep,
Blood stains the snowy foam of the tumultuous deep.

Swift chances in that combat—many a check,
And many a change, a dark and wild turmoil ;
Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck
Locked in stiff rings his adamantine coil,
Until the Eagle, faint with pain and toil,
Remitted his strong flight, and near the sea
Languidly fluttered, hopeless so to foil
His adversary, who then reared on high
His red and burning crest, radiant with victory.

Then on the white edge of the bursting surge,
Where they had sunk together, would the Snake
Relax his suffocating grasp, and scourge
The wind with his wild writhings ; for, to break
That chain of torment, the vast bird would shake
The strength of his unconquerable wings
As in despair, and with his sinewy neck
Dissolve in sudden shock those linkèd rings,
Then soar—as swift as smoke from a volcano springs.

Wile baffled wile, and strength encountered strength,
Thus long, but unprevailing :—the event
Of that portentous fight appeared at length :
Until the lamp of day was almost spent
It had endured, when lifeless, stark, and rent,

Hung high that mighty Serpent, and at last
Fell to the sea, while o'er the continent,
With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle past,
Heavily borne away on the exhausted blast.

PART V
i. 2

PART V

ii. I

WORLDS on worlds are rolling ever
From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river
Sparkling, bursting, borne away.
But they are still immortal
Who, through birth's orient portal
And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
Clothe their unceasing flight
In the brief dust and light
Gathered around their chariots as they go ;
New shapes they still may weave,
New gods, new laws receive,
Bright or dim are they as the robes they last
On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A power from the unknown God,
A Promethean conqueror came ;
Like a triumphal path he trod
The thorns of death and shame.
A mortal shape to him
Was like the vapour dim
Which the orient planet animates with light ;
Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,
Like bloodhounds mild and tame,
Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight ;
The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set :
While blazoned as on heaven's immortal noon
The cross leads generations on.

PART V

ii. I

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep
From one whose dreams are Paradise
Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
And day peers forth with her blank eyes ;
So fleet, so faint, so fair,
The Powers of earth and air
Fled from the folding star of Bethlehem :
Apollo, Pan, and Love,
And even Olympian Jove
Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them ;
• Our hills and seas and streams
Dispeopled of their dreams,
Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,
Wailed for the golden years.

I

PART V A GLORIOUS people vibrated again.

ii. 2 The lightning of the nations, Liberty,
 From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
 Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
 Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,
 And in the rapid plumes of song
 Clothed itself, sublime and strong—
 As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among—
 Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey ;
 Till from its station in the Heaven of Fame
 The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
 Of the remotest sphere of living flame
 Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
 As foam from a ship's swiftmess ; when there came
 A voice out of the deep. I will record the same.

II

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth :
 The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
 Into the depths of Heaven. The daedal Earth,
 That island in the ocean of the world,
 Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air :
 But this divinest universe
 Was yet a chaos and a curse,
 For thou wert not : but, Power from worst producing
 worse,
 The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
 And of the birds, and of the watery forms,

And there was war among them, and despair

PART V

Within them, raging without truce or terms : ii. 2

The bosom of their violated nurse

Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms
on worms,

And men on men ; each heart was as a hell of storms.

III

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied

His generations under the pavilion

Of the Sun's throne : palace and pyramid,

Temple and prison, to many a swarming million

Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves.

This human living multitude

Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,

For thou wert not ; but o'er the populous solitude,

Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,

Hung Tyranny ; beneath, sate deified

The sister-pest, congregator of slaves ;

Into the shadow of her pinions wide,

Anarchs and priests who feed on gold and blood,

Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,

Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

IV

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,

And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves

PART V Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
 ii. 2 Of favouring Heaven : from their enchanted caves
 Prophetic echoes flung dim melody
 On the unapprehensive wild.
 The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
 Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled ;
 And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
 Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
 Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
 Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein
 Of Parian stone ; and, yet a speechless child,
 Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain
 Her lidless eyes for thee ; when, o'er the Aegean
 main,

V

Athens arose : a city such as vision
 Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
 Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
 Of kingliest masonry ; the ocean-floors
 Pave it, the evening sky pavilions it,
 Its portals are inhabited
 By thunder-zonèd winds, each head
 Within its cloudy wings with sunfire garlanded ;
 A divine work ! Athens, diviner yet,
 Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will
 Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set ;
 For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill

Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal dead
In marble immortality, that hill,
Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

PART V

ii. 2

VI

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay,
Immoveably unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it cannot pass away !
The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
With an earth-awakening blast
Through the caverns of the past ;
Religion veils her eyes ; Oppression shrinks aghast :
A wingèd sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
Which soars where expectation never flew,
Rending the veil of space and time asunder !
One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew ;
One sun illumines Heaven ; one Spirit vast
With life and love makes chaos ever new,
As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

VII

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmean Maenad,
She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
From that Elysian food was yet unweanèd ;
And many a deed of terrible uprightness

PART V

ii. 2

By thy sweet love was sanctified ;
And in thy smile, and by thy side,
Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,
And gold profaned thy Capitolian throne,
Thou didst desert, with spirit-wingèd lightness,
The senate of the tyrants : they sunk prone,
Slaves of one tyrant : Palatinus sighed
Faint echoes of Ionian song ; that tone
Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

VIII

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
Or utmost islet inaccessible,
Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks,
And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
To talk in echoes sad and stern,
Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn ?
For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.
What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks
Were quickly dried ! for thou didst groan, not
weep,
When from its sea of death, to kill and burn,
The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

IX

A thousand years the Earth cried, Where art thou? PART V

And then the shadow of thy coming fell ii. 2

On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow :

And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,

Arose in sacred Italy,

Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned
majesty ;

The multitudinous anarchy did sweep,

And burst around their walls, like idle foam,

Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep

Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb

Dissonant arms ; and Art, which cannot die,

With divine wand traced on our earthly home

Fit imagery to pave Heaven's everlasting dome.

X

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon ! thou terror

Of the world's wolves ! thou bearer of the quiver,

Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-wingèd Error,

As light may pierce the clouds when they dis sever

In the calm regions of the orient Day !

Luther caught thy wakening glance ;

Like lightning, from his leaden lance

Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance

In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay :

And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen

PART V In songs whose music cannot pass away,
ii. 2 Though it must flow for ever : not unseen
Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

XI

The eager Hours and unreluctant Years,
As on a dawn-illuminated mountain, stood,
Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
Darkening each other with their multitude,
And cried aloud, Liberty ! Indignation
Answered Pity from her cave ;
Death grew pale within the grave,
And Desolation howled to the Destroyer, Save !
When like Heaven's sun, girt by the exhalation
Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,
Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
Like shadows : as if day had cloven the skies
At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

XII

Thou Heaven of earth ! what spells could pall thee
then,

In ominous eclipse ? A thousand years,

Bred from the slime of deep Oppression's den,
 Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
 Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away ;
 How like Bacchanals of blood
 Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
 Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred
 brood !
 When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
 The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers,
 Rose : armies mingled in obscure array,
 Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred
 bowers
 Of serene Heaven. He, by the past pursued,
 Rests with those dead but unforgotten Hours
 Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral
 towers.

XIII

England yet sleeps : was she not called of old ?
 Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
 Vesuvius wakens Aetna, and the cold
 Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in sunder :
 O'er the lit waves every Aeolian isle
 From Pithecusa to Pelorus
 Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus :
 They cry, Be dim, ye lamps of Heaven suspended o'er
 us.

Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
 And they dissolve ; but Spain's were links of steel,

PART V Till bit to dust by Virtue's keenest file.
ii. 2 Twins of a single destiny ! appeal
To the eternal Years enthroned before us
In the dim West : Impress us, from a seal,
All ye have thought and done ! Time cannot dare
conceal.

XIV

Tomb of Arminius ! render up thy dead,
Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
His soul may stream over the tyrant's head :
Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
King-deluded Germany ;
His dead spirit lives in thee.
Why do we fear or hope ? thou art already free !
And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
And glorious world ! thou flowery wilderness !
Thou island of Eternity ! thou shrine
Where Desolation, clothed with loveliness,
Worships the thing thou wert ! O Italy,
Gather thy blood into thy heart ; repress
The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces.

XV

Oh that the free would stamp the impious name
Of KING into the dust ! or write it there,

So that this blot upon the page of fame

Were as a serpent's path, which the light air
Erases, and the flat sands close behind !

Ye the oracle have heard :

Lift the victory-flashing sword,

And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,

Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind

Into a mass, irrefragably firm,

The axes and the rods which awe mankind ;

The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm

Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred ;

Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,

To set thine armèd heel on this reluctant worm.

PART V

ii. 2

XVI

Oh that the wise from their bright minds would kindle

Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,

That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and
dwindle

Into the hell from which it first was hurled,

A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure ;

Till human thoughts might kneel alone

Each before the judgement-throne

Of its own aweless soul, or of the Power unknown !

Oh that the words which make the thoughts obscure

From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering
dew

From a white lake blot Heaven's blue portraiture,

PART V Were stript of their thin masks and various hue
ii. 2 And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
 Till in the nakedness of false and true
 They stood before their Lord, each to receive its
 due !

XVII

He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
 Can be between the cradle and the grave,
Crowned him the King of Life. Oh vain endeavour !
 If on his own high will, a willing slave,
He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.
 What if earth can clothe and feed
 Amplest millions at their need,
And power in thought be as the tree within the seed !
 Oh what if Art, an ardent intercessor,
 Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,
 Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
 And cries : Give me, thy child, dominion
Over all height and depth ! if Life can breed
 New wants, and Wealth, from those who toil and groan,
 Rend, of thy gifts and hers, a thousandfold for one.

XVIII

Come Thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
 Of man's deep spirit, as the morning star
Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,
 Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
196

Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame ;

Comes she not, and come ye not,

Rulers of eternal thought,

To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportioned lot ?

Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame

Of what has been, the Hope of what will be ?

O Liberty ! if such could be thy name

Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee :

If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought

By blood or tears, have not the wise and free

Wept tears, and blood like tears ? The solemn

harmony

PART. V

ii. 2

XIX

Paused, and the spirit of that mighty singing

To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn.

Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging

Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,

Sinks headlong through the ærial golden light

On the heavy sounding plain,

When the bolt has pierced its brain ;

As summer clouds dissolve, unburthened of their rain ;

As a far taper fades with fading night,

As a brief insect dies with dying day,

My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,

Drooped ; o'er it closed the echoes far away

Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,

As waves which lately paved his watery way

Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

I

PART V THE fiery mountains answer each other ;
ii. 3 Their thunderings are echoed from zone to zone ;
The tempestuous oceans awake one another,
And the ice-rocks are shaken round Winter's throne,
When the clarion of the Typhoon is blown.

II

From a single cloud the lightning flashes,
Whilst a thousand isles are illumined around,
Earthquake is trampling one city to ashes,
An hundred are shuddering and tottering ; the sound
Is bellowing underground.

III

But keener thy gaze than the lightning's glare,
And swifter thy step than the earthquake's tramp ;
Thou deafenest the rage of the ocean ; thy stare
Makes blind the volcanoes ; the sun's bright lamp
To thine is a fen-fire damp.

IV

From billow and mountain and exhalation
The sunlight is darted through vapour and blast ;
From spirit to spirit, from nation to nation,
From city to hamlet thy dawning is cast,
And tyrants and slaves are like shadows of night
In the van of the morning light.

I .

THE world's great age begins anew,
 The golden years return,
 The earth doth like a snake renew
 Her winter weeds outworn :
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

PART V

ii. 4

II

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
 From waves serener far ;
 A new Peneus rolls his fountains
 Against the morning star.
 Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
 Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

III

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
 Fraught with a later prize ;
 Another Orpheus sings again,
 And loves, and weeps and dies.
 A new Ulysses leaves once more
 Calypso for his native shore.

IV

Oh write no more the tale of Troy,
 If earth Death's scroll must be !
 Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
 Which dawns upon the free :
 Although a subtler Sphinx renew
 Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

PART V

ii. 4

V

Another Athens shall arise
And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
The splendour of its prime ;
And leave, if nought so bright may live,
All earth can take or Heaven can give.

VI

Saturn and Love their long repose
Shall burst, more bright and good
Than all who fell, than One who rose,
Than many unsubdued :
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
But votive tears and symbol flowers.

VII

Oh cease ! must hate and death return ?
Cease ! must men kill and die ?
Cease ! drain not to its dregs the urn
Of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past,
Oh might it die or rest at last !

THE pale stars are gone !

For the Sun, their swift shepherd,

To their folds them compelling,

In the depths of the dawn,

Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee

Beyond his blue dwelling,

As fawns flee the leopard.

But where are ye ?

PART V

iii. I

PART V

iii. 2

I

HERE, Oh here :
We bear the bier
Of the Father of many a cancelled year !
Spectres we
Of the dead Hours be,
We bear Time to his tomb in Eternity.

Strew, Oh strew
Hair, not yew !
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew !
Be the faded flowers
Of Death's bare bowers
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours !

II

Haste, Oh haste !
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by Day, from Heaven's blue waste,
We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,
With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony !

I

BRIGHT clouds float in Heaven,
 Dew-stars gleam on Earth,
 Waves assemble on Ocean,
 They are gathered and driven

PART V

iii. 3

By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee !
 They shake with emotion,
 They dance in their mirth.
 But where are ye ?

II

The pine-boughs are singing
 Old songs with new gladness,
 The billows and fountains
 Fresh music are flinging,
 Like the notes of a spirit, from land and from sea ;
 The storms mock the mountains
 With the thunder of gladness.
 But where are ye ?

PART V

iii. 4

Semichorus I of Hours

THE voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
Which covered our being and darkened our birth
In the deep.

A Voice

In the deep ?

Semichorus II

Oh, below the deep.

Semichorus I

An hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept,
Found the truth ——

Semichorus II

Worse than his visions were !

Semichorus I

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep ;
We have known the voice of Love in dreams,
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap ——

Semichorus II

As the billows leap in the morning beams !

Chorus of Hours

PART V

iii. 5

WEAVE the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with song Heaven's silent light,
Enchant the Day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of Night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the Day like a bleeding deer,
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,
Let the Hours, and the Spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A Voice

Unite!

Chorus of Spirits

We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along ;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half-asleep.

PART V

Chorus of Hours

- iii. 5 Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
And your eyes are as Love which is veiled not ?

Chorus of Spirits

We come from the mind
Of human kind
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind,
Now 'tis an Ocean
Of clear emotion,
A Heaven of serene and mighty motion

From that deep Abyss
Of wonder and bliss,
Whose caverns are crystal palaces ;
From those skiey towers
Where Thought's crowned Powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours !

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses ;
From the azure isles,
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her syren wiles.
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From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy ;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs
Where Science bedews his daedal wings.

Years after years,
Through blood, and tears,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears ;
We waded and flew,
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandalled with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm ;
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on, Paradise.

Chorus of Spirits and Hours

Then weave the web of the mystic measure ;
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth,
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
To an Ocean of splendour and harmony !

PART V

Chorus of Spirits

iii. 5

Our spoil is won,
Our task is done,
We are free to dive, or soar, or run ;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round.

We'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonise :
Death, Chaos, and Night,
From the sound of our flight,
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
And the Spirit of Might,
Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight ;
And Love, Thought, and Breath,
The powers that quell Death,
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
In the void's loose field
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield ;
We will take our plan
From the new world of man,
And our work shall be called the Promethean.

Chorus of Hours

PART V

iii. 5

Break the dance, and scatter the song;
Let some depart, and some remain.

Semichorus I

We, beyond Heaven, are driven along :

Semichorus II

Us the enchantments of Earth retain :

Semichorus I

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,
With the Spirits which build a new Earth and Sea,
And a Heaven where yet Heaven could never be.

Semichorus II

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,
Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,
With the Powers of a world of perfect light.

Semichorus I

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

PART V

Semichorus II

- iii. 5 We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,
 And the happy forms of its death and birth
 Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

Chorus of Hours and Spirits

Break the dance, and scatter the song,
 Let some depart and some remain,
Wherever we fly we lead along
In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong,
 The clouds that are heavy with Love's sweet rain.

The Earth

PART V

iii. 6

THE joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness !
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,
The vaporous exultation not to be confined !
Ha ! ha ! the animation of delight
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

The Moon

Brother mine, calm wanderer,
Happy globe of land and air,
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
Which penetrates my frozen frame,
And passes with the warmth of flame,
With love, and odour, and deep melody
Through me, through me !

The Earth

Ha ! ha ! the caverns of my hollow mountains,
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.
The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

The Moon

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,

PART V

iii. 6

My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine :
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth
My cold bare bosom : Oh ! it must be thine
On mine, on mine !

Gazing on thee I feel, I know
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom move :
Music is in the sea and air,
Wingèd clouds soar here and there,
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of :
'Tis Love, all Love !

The shadow of white Death has past
From my path in Heaven at last,
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep ;
And through my newly-woven bowers,
Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep.

The Earth

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a wingèd mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

The Moon

PART V

iii. 6

Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying
Of thine own joy, and Heaven's smile divine ;
All suns and constellations shower
On thee a light, a life, a power
Which doth array thy sphere ; thou pourest thine
On mine, on mine !

The Earth

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens, dreaming delight,
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep ;
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth
keep.

The Moon

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull ;
So, when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee
Covered ; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
Full, Oh, too full !

Thou art speeding round the sun
Brightest world of many a one ;

PART V

iii. 6

Green and azure sphere which shimest
With a light which is divinest
Among all the lamps of Heaven
To whom life and light is given ;
I, thy crystal paramour
Borne beside thee by a power
Like the polar Paradise,
Magnet-like, of lovers' eyes ;
I, a most enamoured maiden
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move
Gazing, an insatiate bride,
On thy form from every side
Like a Mænad, round the cup
Which Agave lifted up
In the weird Cadmaean forest.

Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
I must hurry, whirl and follow,
Through the Heavens wide and hollow,
Sheltered, by the warm embrace
Of thy soul, from hungry space,
Drinking, from thy sense and sight,
Beauty, majesty, and might ;
As a lover or chameleon
Grows like what it looks upon,
As a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky

Until its hue grows like what it beholds ;
As a gray and watery mist
Glow's like solid amethyst
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow.

PART V

iii. 6

The Earth

And the weak day weeps
That it should be so.
Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight
Falls on me like thy clear and tender light
Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,
Through isles for ever calm ;
Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
The caverns of my pride's deep universe,
Charming the tiger joy, whose trappings fierce
Made wounds which need thy balm.

PART V.

Demogorgon

iv.

THOU, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,
Beautiful orb ! gathering as thou dost roll
The Love which paves thy path along the skies :

The Earth

I hear : I am as a drop of dew that dies.

Demogorgon

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee ;
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony :

The Moon

I hear : I am a leaf shaken by thee !

Demogorgon

Ye Kings of suns and stars, Daemons and Gods,
Aetherial Dominations, who possess
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness :

A Voice from above

Our great Republic hears, we are blest, and bless.

Demogorgon

PART V

iv.

Ye happy Dead, whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colours to portray,
Whether your nature is that Universe
Which once ye saw and suffered ——

A Voice from beneath

Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

Demogorgon

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone
Of sullen lead ; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on :

A confused Voice

We hear : thy words waken Oblivion.

Demogorgon

Spirits, whose homes are flesh : ye beasts and birds,
Ye worms, and fish ; ye living leaves and buds ;
Lightning and wind ; and ye untameable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes :

A Voice

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

PART V

Demogorgon

iv.

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave ;
A dupe and a deceiver ; a decay ;
A traveller from the cradle to the grave
Through the dim night of this immortal day :

All

Speak : thy strong words may never pass away.

Demogorgon

This is the Day, which down the void Abyss
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep :
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength ;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length ;
These are the spells by which to reassume
An empire o'er the disentangled Doom.

To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite ;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent ;
To love, and bear ; to hope till Hope creates
From his own wreck the thing it contemplates ;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent ;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free ;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

PART V

iv.

EPILOGUE: EPIPSYCHIDION

EPI-
LOGUE

MY Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain ;
Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring
Thee to base company (as chance may do),
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,
My last delight ! tell them that they are dull,
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

SWEET Spirit ! Sister of that orphan one,
Whose empire is the name thou weepst on,
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee
These votive wreaths of withered memory.

EPI-
LOGUE

¶ Poor captive bird ! who, from thy narrow cage,
Pourest such music, that it might assuage
The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,
Were they not deaf to all sweet melody ;
This song shall be thy rose : its petals pale
Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale !
But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,
And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

¶ High, spirit-wingèd Heart ! who dost for ever
Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,
Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed
It over-soared this low and worldly shade,
Lie shattered ; and thy panting, wounded breast
Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest !
I weep vain tears : blood would less bitter be,
Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee.

¶ Seraph of Heaven ! too gentle to be human,
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman
All that is insupportable in thee
Of light, and love, and immortality !
Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse !
Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe !

EPI- Thou Moon beyond the clouds ! Thou living Form
LOGUE Among the Dead ! Thou Star above the Storm !
 Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror !
 Thou Harmony of Nature's art ! Thou Mirror
 In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,
 All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on !

¶ Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee now
Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow ;
I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song
All of its much mortality and wrong,
With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew
From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,
Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy :
Then smile on it, so that it may not die.

¶ I never thought before my death to see
Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,
I love thee ; though the world by no thin name
Will hide that love from its unvalued shame.
Would we two had been twins of the same mother !
Or, that the name my heart lent to another
Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,
Blending two beams of one eternity !
Yet were one lawful and the other true,
These names, though dear, could paint not, as is
 due,
How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me !
I am not thine : I am a part of thee.

¶ Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burnt its wings ; EPI-
LOGUE

Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,
Young Love should teach Time, in his own grey style,
All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,
A lovely soul formed to be blest and bless ?
A well of sealed and secret happiness,
Whose waters like blithe light and music are,
Vanquishing dissonance and gloom ? A Star
Which moves not in the moving Heavens, alone ?
A smile amid dark frowns ? a gentle tone
Amid rude voices ? a beloved light ?
A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight ?
A Lute, which those whom Love has taught to play
Make music on, to soothe the roughest day
And lull fond grief asleep ? a buried treasure ?
A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure ;
A violet-shrouded grave of Woe ?—I measure
The world of fancies, seeking one like thee,
And find—alas ! mine own infirmity.

¶ She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,
And lured me towards sweet Death ; as Night by Day,
Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,
Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,
In the suspended impulse of its lightness,
Were less aetherially light : the brightness
Of her divinest presence trembles through
Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew

EPI- Embodied in the windless Heaven of June
LOGUE Amid the splendour-wingèd stars, the Moon
Burns, inextinguishably beautiful :
And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full
Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,
Killing the sense with passion ; sweet as stops
Of planetary music heard in trance.
In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
The sunbeams of those wells which ever leap
Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep
For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense.
The glory of her being, issuing thence,
Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade
Of unentangled intermixture, made
By Love, of light and motion : one intense
Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,
Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing,
Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing
With the unintermitted blood, which there
Quivers (as in a fleece of snow-like air
The crimson pulse of living morning quiver),
Continuously prolonged, and ending never,
Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled
Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world ;
Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.
Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress
And her loose hair ; and where some heavy tress
The air of her own speed has disentwined,
The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind ;
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EPI-
LOGUE

And in the soul a wild odour is felt,
Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt
Into the bosom of a frozen bud.
See where she stands ! a mortal shape indued
With love and life and light and deity,
And motion which may change but cannot die ;
An image of some bright Eternity ;
A shadow of some golden dream ; a Splendour
Leaving the third sphere pilotless ; a tender
Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love
Under whose motions life's dull billows move ;
A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning ;
A Vision like incarnate April, warning,
With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
Into his summer grave. ¶ Ah, woe is me !
What have I dared ? where am I lifted ? how
Shall I descend and perish not ? I know
That Love makes all things equal : I have heard
By mine own heart this joyous truth averred :
The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
In love and worship blends itself with God.

Spouse ! Sister ! Angel ! Pilot of the Fate
Whose course has been so starless ! Oh, too late
Belovèd ! Oh, too soon adored, by me !
For in the fields of immortality
My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,
A divine presence in a place divine ;
Or should have moved beside it on this earth,

EPI- A shadow of that substance, from its birth ;
LOGUE But not as now :—I love thee ; yes, I feel
That on the fountain of my heart a seal
Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright
For thee, since in those tears thou hast delight.
We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,
For one another, though dissimilar ;
Such difference without discord, as can make
Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake
As trembling leaves in a continuous air ?

¶ Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare
Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wreckt.
I never was attached to that great sect,
Whose doctrine is, that each one should select
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion, though it is the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,
Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world, and so
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

¶ True Love in this differs from gold and clay,
That to divide is not to take away.

Love is like understanding, that grows bright,
Gazing on many truths ; 'tis like thy light,

Imagination ! which from earth and sky,
And from the depths of human phantasy,
As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills
The Universe with glorious beams, and kills
Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow
Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow
The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
The life that wears, the spirit that creates
One object, and one form, and builds thereby
A sepulchre for its eternity.

¶ Mind from its object differs most in this :
Evil from good ; misery from happiness ;
The baser from the nobler ; the impure
And frail, from what is clear and must endure.
If you divide suffering and dross, you may
Diminish till it is consumed away ;
If you divide pleasure and love and thought,
Each part exceeds the whole ; and we know not
How much, while any yet remains unshared,
Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared :
This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw
The unenvied light of hope ; the eternal law
By which those live, to whom this world of life
Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife
Tills for the promise of a later birth
The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

¶ There was a Being whom my spirit oft

EPI- Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,
LOGUE In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,
Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves
Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves
Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor
Paved her light steps ;—on an imagined shore,
Under the grey beak of some promontory
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,
That I beheld her not. In solitudes
Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,
And from the fountains, and the odours deep
Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep
Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,
Breathed but of her to the enamoured air ;
And from the breezes whether low or loud,
And from the rain of every passing cloud,
And from the singing of the summer birds,
And from all sounds, all silence. In the words
Of antique verse and high romance,—in form,
Sound, colour,—in whatever checks that Storm
Which with the shattered present chokes the past ;
And in that best philosophy, whose taste
Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom
As glorious as a fiery martyrdom ;
Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.

¶ Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth
I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,
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EPI-
LOGUE

And towards the loadstar of my one desire,
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,
When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere
A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,
As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.
But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame,
Past, like a God throned on a wingèd planet,
Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,
Into the dreary cone of our life's shade ;
And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,
I would have followed, though the grave between
Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen :
When a voice said : O Thou of hearts the weakest,
The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest.
Then I—Where ? the world's echo answered where !
And in that silence, and in my despair,
I questioned every tongueless wind that flew
Over my tower of mourning, if it knew
Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul ;
And murmured names and spells which have control
Over the sightless tyrants of our fate ;
But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate
The night which closed on her ; nor uncreate
That world within this chaos, mine and me,
Of which she was the veiled Divinity,
The world, I say, of thoughts that worshipped her :
And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear
And every gentle passion sick to death,

EPI- Feeding my course with expectation's breath,
LOGUE Into the wintry forest of our life ;
 And struggling through its error with vain strife,
 And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,
 And half bewildered by new forms, I past
 Seeking among those untaught foresters
 If I could find one form resembling hers,
 In which she might have masked herself from me.
 There, One, whose voice was venom'd melody
 Sate by a well, under blue nightshade bowers ;
 The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,
 Her touch was as electric poison, flame
 Out of her looks into my vitals came,
 And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
 A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew
 Into the core of my green heart, and lay
 Upon its leaves ; until, as hair grown grey
 O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime
 With ruins of unseasonable time.

¶ In many mortal forms I rashly sought
The shadow of that idol of my thought.
And some were fair—but beauty dies away :
Others were wise—but honeyed words betray :
And One was true—oh ! why not true to me ?
Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,
I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,
Wounded and weak and panting ; the cold day
Trembled for pity of my strife and pain.

EPI-
LOGUE

When, like a noonday dawn, there shone again
Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed
As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed,
As is the Moon, whose changes ever run
Into themselves, to the eternal Sun ;
The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright
 isles,

Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles ;
'That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame
Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,
And warms not but illumines. Young and fair
As the descended Spirit of that sphere,
She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night
From its own darkness, until all was bright
Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind ;
And, as a cloud charioted by the wind,
She led me to a cave in that wild place,
And sate beside me, with her downward face
Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon
Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.
And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,
And all my being became bright or dim
As the Moon's image in a summer sea,
According as she smiled or frowned on me ;
And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed :
Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead :
For at her silver voice came Death and Life,
Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,
Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,

EPI- The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,
LOGUE And through the cavern without wings they flew,
 And cried Away, he is not of our crew.
 I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

¶ What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,
Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips
Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse ;
And how my soul was as a lampless sea,
And who was then its Tempest ; and when She,
The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost
Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast
The moving billows of my being fell
Into a death of ice, immovable ;
And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,
The white Moon smiling all the while on it,
These words conceal. If not, each word would be
The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me !

¶ At length, into the obscure Forest came
The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.
Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns
Flashed from her motion splendour like the Morn's,
And from her presence life was radiated
Through the grey earth and branches bare and dead ;
So that her way was paved, and roofed above
With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love ;
And music from her respiration spread
Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated

EPI-
LOGUE

By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,
So that the savage winds hung mute around;
And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair
Dissolving the dull cold in the frore air :
Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,
When light is changed to love, this glorious One
Floated into the cavern where I lay,
And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay
Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below
As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow
I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night
Was penetrating me with living light :
I knew it was the Vision veiled from me
So many years—that it was Emily.

¶ Twin spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,
This world of love, this me ; and into birth
Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart
Magnetic might into its central heart ;
And lift its billows and its mists and guide
By everlasting laws, each wind and tide
To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave ;
And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave
Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers
The armies of the rainbow-wingèd showers ;
And, as those married lights, which from the towers
Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe
In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe ;
And all their many-mingled influence blend,

EPI-
LOGUE If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end ;
So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway
Govern my sphere of being, night and day !
Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might ;
Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light ;
And, through the shadow of the seasons three,
From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,
Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.
Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,
Who drew the heart of this frail Universe
Towards thine own ; till, wrecked in that convulsion,
Alternating attraction and repulsion,
Thine went astray and that was rent in twain ;
Oh, float into our azure heaven again !
Be there love's folding-star at thy return ;
The living Sun will feed thee from its urn
Of golden fire ; the Moon will veil her horn
In thy last smiles ; adoring Even and Morn
Will worship thee with incense of calm breath
And lights and shadows ; as the star of Death
And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild
Called Hope and Fear — upon the heart are piled
Their offerings, — of this sacrifice divine
A World shall be the altar. ¶ Lady mine,
Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth
Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth
Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,
Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

EPI-
LOGUE

¶ The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.
 To whatsoe'er of dull mortality
 Is mine, remain a vestal sister still ;
 To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,
 Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united
 Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.
 The hour is come : the destined Star has risen
 Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
 The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set
 The sentinels — but true love never yet
 Was thus constrained : it overleaps all fence
 Like lightning, with invisible violence
 Piercing its continents ; like Heaven's free breath,
 Which he who grasps can hold not ; liker Death,
 Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
 Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
 Of arms : more strength has love than he or they ;
 For it can burst his charnel, and make free
 The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
 The soul in dust and chaos. ¶ Emily,
 A ship is floating in the harbour now,
 A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow ;
 There is a path on the sea's azure floor,
 No keel has ever ploughed that path before ;
 The halcyons brood around the foamless isles ;
 The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles ;
 The merry mariners are bold and free :
 Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me ?
 Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest

EPI-
LOGUE Is a far Eden of the purple East ;
And we between her wings will sit, while Night
And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,
Our ministers, along the boundless Sea,
Treading each other's heels, unheededly.
It is an isle under Ionian skies,
Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,
And, for the harbours are not safe and good,
This land would have remained a solitude
But for some pastoral people native there,
Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air
Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,
Simple and spirited ; innocent and bold.
The blue Ægean girds this chosen home,
With ever-changing sound and light and foam,
Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar ;
And all the winds wandering along the shore
Undulate with the undulating tide :
There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide ;
And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
As clear as elemental diamond,
Of serene morning air ; and far beyond,
The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer
(Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year),
Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls
Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls
Illumining, with sound that never fails
Accompany the noonday nightingales ;
And all the place is peopled with sweet airs ;

EPI-
LOGUE

The light clear element which the isle wears
Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers
And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep ;
And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,
And dart their arrowy odour through the brain
Till you might faint with that delicious pain.
And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,
With that deep music is in unison :
Which is a soul within the soul—they seem
Like echoes of an antenatal dream.
It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,
Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity ;
Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,
Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air.
It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,
Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light
Upon its mountain-peaks ; blind vultures, they
Sail onward far upon their fatal way :
The wingèd storms, chaunting their thunder-psalm
To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,
From which its fields and woods ever renew
Their green and golden immortality.
And from the sea there rise, and from the sky
There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,
Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,
Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,
Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride

EPI- Glowing at once with love and loveliness,
LOGUE Blushes and trembles at its own excess :
 Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
 Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
 An atom of the Eternal, whose own smile
 Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen
 O'er the grey rocks, blue waves, and forests green,
 Filling their bare and void interstices.
 But the chief marvel of the wilderness
 Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
 None of the rustic island-people know :
 'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height
 It overtops the woods ; but, for delight,
 Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime
 Had been invented, in the world's young prime,
 Reared it, a wonder of that simple time,
 An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
 Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
 It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,
 But, as it were Titanic ; in the heart
 Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown
 Out of the mountains, from the living stone,
 Lifting itself in caverns light and high :
 For all the antique and learnèd imagery
 Has been erased, and in the place of it
 The ivy and the wild-vine interknit
 The volumes of their many twining stems ;
 Parasite flowers illumine with dewy gems
 The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky

EPI-
LOGUE

Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery
With moonlight patches, or star atoms keen,
Or fragments of the day's intense serene ;
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers
And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
To sleep in one another's arms, and dream
Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all
that we
Read in their smiles, and call reality.

¶ This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed
Thee to be lady of the solitude.
And I have fitted up some chambers there
Looking towards the golden Eastern air,
And level with the living winds, which flow
Like waves above the living waves below.
I have sent books and music there, and all
Those instruments with which high spirits call
The future from its cradle, and the past
Out of its grave, and make the present last
In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,
Folded within their own eternity.
Our simple life wants little, and true taste
Hires not the pale drudge Luxury to waste
The scene it would adorn, and therefore still
Nature with all her children haunts the hill.
The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet
Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit

EPI- Round the evening tower and the young stars glance
LOGUE Between the quick bats in their twilight dance ;
The spotted deer bask in the fresh moonlight
Before our gate, and the slow silent night
Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep.
Be this our home in life, and when years heap
Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,
Let us become the overhanging day,
The living soul of this Elysian isle,
Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile
We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,
And wander in the meadows, or ascend
The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend
With lightest winds, to touch their paramour ;
Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,
Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,
Possessing and possest by all that is
Within that calm circumference of bliss,
And by each other, till to love and live
Be one : or, at the noontide hour, arrive
Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep
The moonlight of the expired night asleep,
Through which the awakened day can never peep ;
A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,
Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights ;
Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain
Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.

EPI-
LOGUE

And we will talk, until thought's melody
Become too sweet for utterance, and it die
In words, to live again in looks, which dart
With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,
Harmonising silence without a sound.
Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound,
And our veins beat together ; and our lips,
With other eloquence than words, eclipse
The soul that burns between them ; and the wells
Which boil under our being's inmost cells,
The fountains of our deepest life, shall be
Confused in passion's golden purity,
As mountain-springs under the morning Sun.
We shall become the same, we shall be one
Spirit within two frames, oh ! wherefore two ?
One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,
Till like two meteors of expanding flame,
Those spheres instinct with it become the same,
Touch, mingle, are transfigured ; ever still
Burning, yet ever unconsumable :
In one another's substance finding food,
Like flames too pure and light and unimbued
To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,
Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away :
One hope within two wills, one will beneath
Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,
One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
And one annihilation. Woe is me !
The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce

EPI-
LOGUE

Into the height of Love's rare Universe,
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire —
I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire !

WEAK Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,
And say : We are the masters of thy slave ;
What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine ?
Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave,
All singing loud : Love's very pain is sweet.
But its reward is in the world divine
Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave.
So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste
Over the hearts of men, until ye meet
Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,
And bid them love each other and be blest :
And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,
And come and be my guest,—for I am Love's.

EPI-
LOGUE

ENVOI

MUSIC, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory —
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.
Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed ;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

EXPLICIT

TABLE OF YEARS

1815 A SUMMER EVENING
ALASTOR

1816 HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY
MONT BLANC

1817 THE REVOLT OF ISLAM
PRINCE ATHANASE
DEATH:

That time is dead for ever, child
THE DEAD

1818 PASSAGE OF THE APENNINE
Listen, listen, Mary mine
THE EUGANEAN HILLS
STANZAS
THE PAST

1819 PROMETHEUS UNBOUND
ODE TO THE WEST WIND
A SERENADE
LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

1820 THE CLOUD
TO A SKYLARK
ODE TO LIBERTY
ARETHUSA

1820 (Continued)

SONG OF PROSERPINE

HYMN OF APOLLO

HYMN OF PAN

THE QUESTION

TO THE MOON

AUTUMN

DEATH :

First our pleasures die — and then

LIBERTY

THE WORLD'S WANDERERS

TIME LONG PAST

1821 EPIPSYCHIDION

ADONAIS

TO NIGHT

FROM THE ARABIC

TIME

MUTABILITY

SONG

ENVOI

A LAMENT :

O world ! O life ! O time !

A LAMENT :

Swifter far than summer's flight

1821 (Continued)

A BRIDAL SONG

TO JANE :

When passion's trance is overpast

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR

TO JANE :

One word is too often profaned

HELLAS

1822 THE GIFT

THE INVITATION

THE RECOLLECTION

LINES

A DIRGE

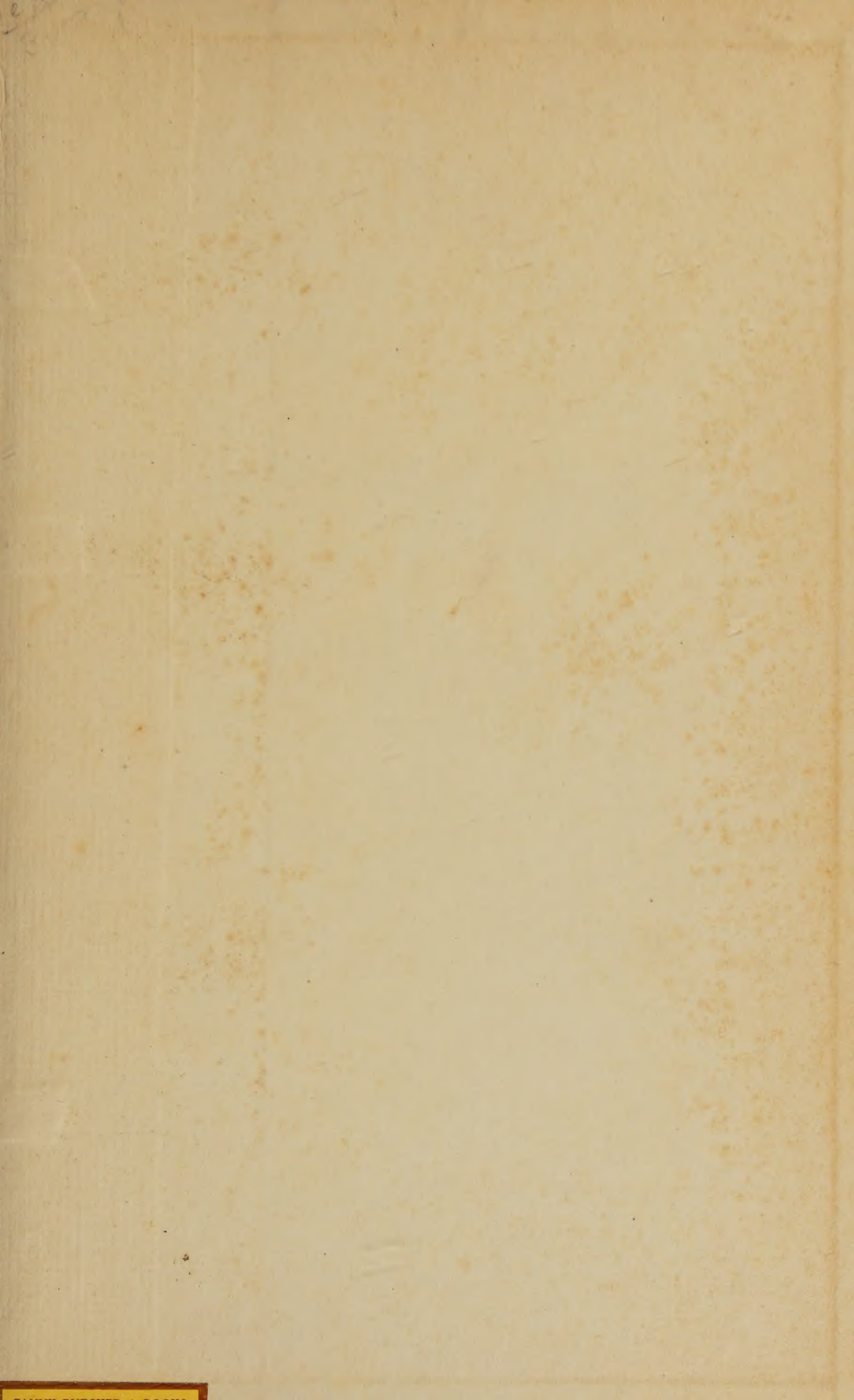
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LERICI

Printed in Great Britain by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd.
London and Aylesbury





For two persons in love, a
night in spring is worth a
month taken at any other time
of year.





586-BAC-691